

PRE-FASCIST ITALY

ILLITERACY IN ITALY 1918



Based on I. Bowman's "New World"

MAP SHOWING ILLITERACY IN ITALY IN 1918. (TO BE CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE QUESTION OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION)

PRE-FASCIST ITALY

The Rise and Fall of
the Parliamentary
Régime
by

MARGOT HENTZE

With a Preface by
DR. STEPHEN H. ROBERTS
M.A., D.SC., D.LITT.

“Je n'impose rien; je ne
propose rien;
j'expose”

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SHOWING ILLITERACY IN ITALY IN 1918. (TO BE
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PREFACE

ONE of the most obvious gaps in the recent treatment of modern European history has been the period of pre-Fascist Italy. Hitherto there has been no satisfactory book covering development between 1871 and 1922, and, quite as important, no adequate attempt to trace the origins of Fascism back into pre-War Italian history.

Miss Margot Hentze, with a distinguished academic record and a remarkable international training, has now filled that gap in a most brilliant fashion. We too often assume that such movements as National Socialism or Fascism may be completely, or even mainly, explained by events since the Armistice. Miss Hentze's detailed survey of the system of parliamentary government in United Italy and her restrained, but pointed, criticisms of that system dispel this fallacy at least. A most useful feature of the book is the synthesis it presents. A merely political chronology would not have explained very much, but Miss Hentze has given full importance to such influences as social factors, regional differences, and especially the vagaries of public opinion.

It is probably in this latter connection that her survey is most stimulating at the present moment. Nothing could be more important from a long-range point of view than her analysis of the persistent Francophilism of the Italian people, even during the period of the Triple Alliance. It is true that, as Crispi pointed out, Italy was constantly separated from France by the difficult problems of the Mediterranean and the Papacy; but the underlying friendliness between the French and the Italian peoples was nearly always present.

There is something grimly fatalistic about this book. The pettiness of some of the leading politicians of United Italy combined with the lack of political training on the part of the people to ruin parliamentary democracy in Italy. The void was there long before Mussolini rose to fill it; the constant cry was for some commanding leader. Every page that Miss Hentze writes justifies the poignant cry of the disillusioned Mazzini: "Italy, my Italy, the Italy of my dreams? Italy the great, the

beautiful, the moral Italy of my heart? This medley of opportunists and cowards and Machiavellis, who let themselves be dragged behind the suggestions of the foreigner—*I thought to call up the soul of Italy, and I see only its corpse!*”

That is the measure of Italy's tragedy. It is at once the justification and condemnation of Mussolini—justification because the earlier system had broken down under such betrayers as Giolitti; but condemnation because Mussolini failed to avail himself of the opportunity which he knew so well to exist. In striving for material advancement and for military strength, he turned away from the path of a health-giving political training for his countrymen that would have atoned for the period of travail so sensitively and clearly outlined by Miss Hentze in this book. It is as a background explanation of the conditions which allowed Fascism to arise that this book is of such topical importance. It is with a feeling of ineffable tragedy, a regret for what might have been, that one puts it down.

STEPHEN H. ROBERTS

FOREWORD

IN writing this book I have the following debts to acknowledge: first, and most important, to Dr. Stephen H. Roberts, to whom I owe an invaluable training in history as well as much encouragement in my research. Only those who have worked with Dr. Roberts can appreciate the stimulus of his personality. Secondly, to Professor H. Laski, of the University of London, who criticized the manuscript as it was written. Like all who have come in contact with Professor Laski, I have to thank him for opening up to me many new and interesting avenues in political thought. Thirdly, to Signor Benedetto Croce, who granted me the honour of an interview and gave me the benefit of his specialized advice on sources.

Acknowledgments are also due to Dr. H. Finer for some suggestions regarding my bibliography; to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Dr. Wallace, for suggestions regarding the system of notes; to Professor G. Del Vecchio, of the University of Rome, for generously allowing me the use of his private library; and finally, to the Belgian Embassy and Consul (M. Lamy) in Rome. Their courteous assistance was invaluable in obtaining the entrée to the sources of the Library of the Camera dei Deputati.

For the rest, I should like to express my grateful thanks to all my Italian friends who honoured me with their confidence on political questions; and I should like also to express my appreciation of the kindness and courtesy shown me by the staff of the Library of the Camera dei Deputati in Rome and the Bibliotheca Nazionale Centrale in Florence.

My final debt is to my friend Dr. Phyllis Kaberry (Anthropologist), whose unwearied interest in the subject and keen discussion of my manuscript contributed greatly to the writing of the book.

M. H.

TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

IN

OMAGGIO

THE "DAMNOSA HEREDITAS"

"SIRE, we have made Italy—now we must make Italians," D'Azeglio's saying has become famous and expresses the central problem of the new age. For the final achievement of unity by the occupation of Rome in 1870 did not mean that there existed either a united people or an organic state. Years were to be needed before the feeling of nationality took root in the peninsula and became a habit of mind among the population, or an integral part of their spirit. At this time only a small part of the aristocrats and intellectuals felt themselves to be Italians; the majority were Venetians, Piedmontese, Neapolitans, Sicilians—a queer medley of peoples from seven different states, speaking some twelve different dialects, and even in the case of the educated classes hardly aware of the significance of their common culture. National solidarity had not been created among them by the Risorgimento because it had not been a popular movement, but a rebellion on the part of an élite drawn mainly from the learned professions who, with the help of the middle classes, had recruited enough volunteers among the inert masses to carry out their will.¹ Garibaldi himself acknowledged that in his campaigns scarcely a single member of the peasant class had been among his volunteers (though the peasants comprised two-thirds of the population), and despite the romantic tradition which later grew up nothing could be further from the truth than the legend of "all Italy" and the "Italian people" rising to cast off their chains.² The greater part of the people were indifferent to political questions, and if they had been called on to express an opinion would probably from staunch conservatism have expressed one favourable to the old régime.³ Even among those who had participated in the movement, moreover, the impulse to action had been given less by a real awakening of national consciousness than by a generous instinct of revolt against alien domination and unjust oppression.⁴

It was not surprising therefore that the actual establishment

of the kingdom should have left many of its supporters bewildered and almost disillusioned. Once the exhilaration of the struggle was over critical analysis succeeded to emotional enthusiasm, and many of the conceptions which had previously seemed satisfactory and inspiring were found to be empty and vague. When the King at last took his place in the Quirinal, men felt doubt and weariness and a conflict of old loyalties and traditions rather than an eager recognition of a common life and a community of interests. And their feeling was rooted not only in the recent experience of the *Risorgimento*, but in the history and tradition of Italy as a whole. Misgoverned and oppressed for centuries, an attitude of indifference and scepticism seemed to have become permanent in the peninsula—a passive attitude from which the energetic minority might temporarily be roused by a call to action and sacrifice, but into which they relapsed once the crisis was over. It was indeed one thing to die for the dream—the ideal that had been called the *Risorgimento*—and another to live for it, to translate its meaning into terms of everyday existence, and see the disintegration of habits and customs and the re-orientation of the most familiar aspects of daily life. And this, as it now seemed, without a goal. To be called on to give everything for “unity”: that had been at least a rallying cry. But what to do with unity when it was achieved? Italy could not find herself, and began to wonder if there was anything to find.⁵

The crux of the matter was perhaps that the break with the past was too sudden to be bridged in one generation; but the difficulty of mental readjustment was also increased by the difficulties of material readjustment, due to the recent conditions of Italian life. Regarded in 1815 as a “geographical expression” to be carved into a number of small states, subsequently parcelled out among six dynasties only one of which was native to the land, and later treated as a field for dynastic exploitation, the peninsula had not previously existed as a single entity, but only as the sum of its constituent parts. From the settlement of Vienna onwards each small state had represented a self-sufficient complex, closed within a Chinese wall of provincial egotism, guarded from contact with its

neighbours and encouraged to despise their government, manners, and customs. Early in the century Piedmont for instance had been so particularist in character that Alfieri remarked that "Italian speech is contraband at Turin," and as late as 1846 the saying "Italy ends at the Garigliano" had been widely current in the North. Nor had such estrangement existed only among the different states. In addition there had been local feuds between the component parts of the different principalities, as a result of which Sicily had preferred understandings with France and England to understandings with Naples,⁶ while the Romagna had wished for freedom from the papal states, and Genoa had protested against the yoke of Piedmont. Even economically, moreover, there had been little intercourse between one state and another, and in many instances their trade had been artificially diverted abroad for fear lest commercial community of interests should lead to inopportune political sympathies. There could never have been a customs union preceding political union as there had been in Germany; on the contrary, of all the seven states only Tuscany had favoured free trade and a liberal tariff, while many of the Southern industries had depended (and in 1870 still depended) for their lives on protection from the North. Economic segregation had been maintained almost as a matter of course, and its maintenance had been helped by the internal diversity of the provinces' economic structure. Prior to union there had existed no common standards of weights and measures in the peninsula, and in the papal states alone each small province had had its own particular standards.⁷ Coinage and currency had varied greatly, and methods of production and systems of land tenure at least equally as much. While land in Tuscany for instance had been so distributed that one-half of the agricultural population were proprietors,⁸ in Sicily the vast majority had been landless, and nine-tenths of the soil had been locked up in the great estates of the nobles and the churches.⁹ And so far as industry was concerned the disparity had been similar. Though a thriving silk trade had existed in Lombardy-Venetia, there had been hardly any industry in the Neapolitan provinces, and elsewhere the difference had been such as to make it difficult if not impossible to

postulate an average stage of economic development in the country.

The standards of education, the framework of government, and the forms of local administration had varied in much the same fashion. There had been seven different methods of collecting taxes in use throughout the peninsula; seven different systems of civil and criminal law; seven different armies; and seven different bureaucracies, each functioning in its own way. In short, in nearly every aspect of life there had been the elements of permanent separatism and a sense of individuality so strong that only a long period of common experience could hope to break it down—and lack of common experience was precisely the new Italy's weakness.

So many of the foundations of national life were rooted simply in negations—negations that, once the wrongs they summed up were appeased, left no substantial basis of agreement behind them. Rebellion against political oppression, against espionage and petty restrictions on private life, against favouritism and inequality and corruption—these feelings and facts had been general throughout the peninsula, but they represented no permanent material for understanding between the peoples who had shared them. What was lacking was a common historical tradition that could give stability and a sense of continuity to the new trend of events. The first writers and thinkers of the Risorgimento turning to history to base their appeal on an historical principle found themselves confronted by a kaleidoscope of traditions all of great influence in Italy's past, but scarcely one of which could legitimately be given preference over the others. There was the federative tradition, there was the tradition of the Roman Empire, the tradition of foreign rule, of native monarchy, of the medieval communes, of the Lombard kingdom or the Napoleonic kingdom of Italy; to say nothing of the tradition of papal universalism, humanist republicanism, Jacobin monarchism, and of Republican oligarchies and a theocratic state.¹⁰ To some extent this divergency might be offset by the tradition of a common literature and a great cultural inheritance; but this was the possession of only a small minority, and against it there were the psychological differences which made it seem that the

Italians of the different states differed also in stock. Spanish and Arab and Norman blood in Sicily, Albanian and Greek blood in Puglia and the Abruzzi and Calabria, Teutonic and French blood in the mountains and valleys of the North—in short, a mixture of races sufficiently important to add a final element of variety to a problem whose essence was already its complexity.¹¹

Yet even these were not the most serious obstacles to be met in the formation of the new nation. If the past had left behind it only separatism, the work of unity might have been relatively light. The tragedy of Italy was that it had also left behind it a legacy of social suffering, of social and psychological *malaise*. This was the real heritage of the centuries of alien misrule; the heritage that made thinkers speak of a *damnosa hereditas* and wonder uneasily if the spiritual state it represented could be eradicated merely by a political transformation—by the establishment of a new state and the gift of new institutions. The marks left by centuries of decadence seemed inherent in the people's blood, had vitiated their spirit, and were typically expressed in the sceptical saying "we are too old a people." They had indeed the weakness of having had at one and the same time "too much and too little history," of being raw material, barely or not at all formed, and yet already burdened by knowledge of the antiquity of their race and the traditional greatness of its name.¹² Italian society seemed at once bound to an unfortunate past and cut off from a new future; as if lack of fibre were innate in its constitution and dependent also on such more extrinsic evils as the lack of education and persistent social exploitation.

These indeed exerted almost as important an influence as the older political evils. Even for example in the relatively well-administered Piedmont at the beginning of the century the great majority of the people had been illiterate, while in the papal states only 2 per cent had attended school, and matters had been worse in the Neapolitan provinces of the mainland. So late as 1861, after the kingdom had been proclaimed, over three-quarters of the total population were illiterate, and in Naples and Sicily the proportion exceeded 90 per cent.¹³ With such backwardness there went inevitably

much superstition and ignorance—factors that were made worse by an existence that very often amounted to economic slavery. Late in the period, traces of feudalism lingered in Sicily, and in the Neapolitan provinces the peasants were practically the serfs of their lords, reduced by poverty to a condition of great misery, with little idea of law and no power to raise themselves above the necessities of their environment. Of the casual labourer in the Neapolitan provinces it was said that he “lived the life of an ass and died the death of a dog,” and similar conditions existed in Sicily, aggravated by the evils of the sulphur mines, with their trade in child labour and their fostering of vice and corruption.¹⁴ Under the pressure of poverty, theft was common and brigandage “endemic” both before and even after the Risorgimento;¹⁵ and though life was on a higher and better level in the North, the difference mainly pointed the disparity between North and South—the unfortunate dualism that was to lead to the “question of the South” and keep Italy divided against herself for three generations.¹⁶ Moreover, even in the North the comparative prosperity of the farmer in Tuscany and Lombardy and Modena did not mean the absence of rackrents, of oppressive contracts, and of nomad daily labourers.

It was conditions such as these that made the rural masses for the most part deaf to the appeal of the Risorgimento and indifferent to a political programme in which they could find nothing to fit in with the reality of their daily lives, and little to give hope of its material improvement. In these years at least “representative government” and the responsibilities of free citizens were meaningless terms to them, and there was something grimly humorous in the abstract rhetoric of the Mazzinians who assumed that such a poverty-stricken throng (as yet hardly existent as a political class) could overnight be made the foundation of a modern and politically democratic State.¹⁷ Nor, from this point of view, was the condition of the lower strata of the urban population more encouraging. It is true that they represented only a very small section of the nation (in 1861 Naples was the sole city whose population exceeded 300,000), but Naples had its 40,000 *lazzaroni* who demoralized the character of the city by their mode of life;

while Rome and Venice had each its swarm of beggars and hangers-on—elements that inevitably acted as a drag on the progressive spirit of the artisan class above them.¹⁸ The latter, representing not more than 15 per cent of the nation, comprised nevertheless nearly all those engaged in industrial occupations and was intelligent and hardworking, capable of contributing to the nation's moral resources, if it could only have obtained the necessary leadership from above.

But this unfortunately was wanting. The nobility for the most part had no taste for public affairs or public life, and were in any case divided by regional differences. There was little in common between the stiff military aristocracy of Piedmont, the good-humored bourgeois nobility of Tuscany, and the rude feudal barons of the South. Such elements of leadership as existed had to be looked for chiefly in the middle classes, who, as the initiators of the Risorgimento and the creators of the new Italy, enjoyed the most influential and assured position in the country. But by an ironic twist of fate this class too had its psychological *malaise* and its share in the *damnosa hereditas*—a heritage that in its case was one of an existence divorced from social realities and lacking in experience of normal political life. Systematically set aside and kept from a share in public affairs by autocratic governments that saw in it the potential enemy of a despotic system, it had been trained to concentrate its activities on private ends, had been prevented from acquiring the habit of social initiative or thinking in general social terms. As a result it was often at a loss before the problems of the new age and was slow to comprehend its needs, so that men spoke later of "the inadequacy of the middle class" as a phenomenon of the post-Risorgimento period, making the phrase a formula that passed into Italian history as typical of bourgeois inability to surmount the circle of its own narrow interests.¹⁹

Paradoxically enough, moreover, the Risorgimento—nominally an attempt at creating a nation-wide movement—had tended to increase this evil rather than rectify it. For the fact that the bourgeois class had found itself an isolated minority without any real popular following had made it negligent regarding popular interests. Relying chiefly on

themselves, and forgetting that their class and the State were not co-existent terms, the bourgeoisie had passed by the questions which the necessity of obtaining popular collaboration might have compelled them to face, and had perpetuated carelessly and almost casually the initial schism between "directing minority" and "passive majority" which was implicit in the exclusive character of the rebellion.²⁰ At the same time they had acquired an instinctive disdain for the "quietist" category in the nation, whose tepid patriotism and immobility presented so striking a contrast to their own daring and capacity for action. Indeed, the very idealism that inspired their revolt, the sense of the purity of their intentions, kept the leaders from probing more deeply into the nature of their work and its ultimate historical significance. They did not understand that given Italy's conditions what was wanted was not only a political insurrection against the foreigner, but in fact almost a social revolution, and that it was not sufficient to change a régime and improvise a modern state without regenerating a people and improvising a social conscience.²¹ In short, the heat of the struggle against Austria, with its vivid heroism and its stubborn gallantry, had swept the victors into possession of the forms of power before they had had time to reflect on their meaning.

It was Italy's ill-luck that this attitude, instead of being checked by the political and philosophical thought of the age, was reinforced by them. For if the human and practical bases of the kingdom were by their heterogeneity at war with the conception of unity, the theoretical bases of thought were no less out of joint. No Southern Italian of the Risorgimento either before or after 1848 realized that the elevation of the agricultural masses might be a factor in the reconstruction of the State;²² and even among the other writers of the period it was some time before it came to be recognized that the principle of "Liberalism" should logically have more than a political significance and should take account of the actual interests and needs of all those whom it was supposedly to "free." Thus Gioberti, one of the most notable thinkers of the age, in his early writings appears to have had little idea of the masses as possessing a definite character of their own

or as necessarily forming the broad foundation for his dreams of a new State. It was only immediately before his death that he revised his theories and realized the existence of social and economic aspects to his political revolution; and even then his *Rinnovamento*, which was to take account of the "unhappiness of the masses and their need of redemption," was essentially a movement by an intellectual aristocracy expressing the supremacy of thought. More realistic was the Liberalism of the Lombard Cattaneo, since it postulated the right of the rural population to a share in the life of the State and a decent standard of living; but Cattaneo provided rather material for general discussion than a programme for political action.

In the general field of thought Mazzini's influence held sway—Mazzini the exile (characteristically the exile) of London, Lugano and Marseilles, alienated from his country and its conditions, knowing little of the real people of Italy, but ready to convert his illusions into axiomatic principles for the benefit of the Italian nation. Certainly his teaching, if it inspired the triumph of the Risorgimento, was responsible also for much of its failure; and his mystic patriotism, while it helped to form the national consciousness, also helped to vitiate the national power of thought. Accustomed to live only among political abstractions, the Italians of the period had difficulty in acclimatizing themselves to an atmosphere mixed with "baser" elements and could not descend from the heights of nebulous idealism to the practical observation of facts. Whence the succeeding generation of statesmen pre-occupied with ideological formulae and vague universal conceptions; whence also the succeeding current of political thought known as Mazzini-ism—a strange compound of rhetoric and moralism, of sentiment and dogma, of ingenuous faith in the divinity of the "people" and of instinctive recoil from the reality of the masses—of belief in institutions as panaceas for all evils, and of trust in phrases as the weapons of reform. Such political philosophy contained in itself the seeds of its own destruction. Its focal point had been the formal conception of a united Italy, and once that conception was realized it lacked material for further development. In 1861 and 1871 men who had grown grey in the service of the

"patria italiana" found that the new problems they were called on to face had not been included in the political faith they had learned and, cut adrift on a sea of urgent realities, felt that their compass had been lost. Many of them refused to admit that their "Italia una ed indipendente" was not enough, and, trying to live on their memories even when their objective significance had been lost, they treated Italy as a statue whose external proportions might be admired and worshipped from afar, rather than as a dynamic and living organism whose parts must be studied and set functioning for the advantage of all.

Mazzini's influence was not, it is true, entirely responsible for the politicians' tendency to think of Italy's problems mainly in terms of a foreign experience or in terms of a bookish tradition based on general European culture. Another important influence on the situation was derived from the circumstance that so many of the men who were charged with the task of ruling the country and developing it economically were, like Mazzini, men who had spent the greater part of their lives in exile, in prison, or in conspiracy.²³ They were, most of them, men left over from the time of Cavour, "derelicts from many shipwrecks" who had originally belonged to different sects and parties, and were of widely varying quality, capacity, and intellectual worth.²⁴ The majority had little first-hand knowledge of the country they were to govern, and were not sufficiently aware of their ignorance to feel it as a handicap. Moreover, even those who had lived most of their lives in Italy tended to have their horizon bounded by the limits of their own province, so that to the vague cosmopolitanism of their colleagues they could oppose only a narrow provincialism hardly more valid in its extension. Rattazzi might have stood for the type of these men—Rattazzi who "knew Piedmont thoroughly, Italy a little, Europe not at all."²⁵ Rattazzi, courageous and honest where matters of principle were concerned, yet "timid from lack of experience" when he had to do with the life of the people, caring more for the forms of liberty than its spirit, preoccupied with the means of administration to the neglect of its ends. Men of this type could not *ex tempore* acquire an intimate knowledge of Italian conditions, or an adequate understanding of national

necessities, more especially when their minds were already encumbered by a medley of *a priori* notions, and when the pettiness of their regional background hindered them from forming a national point of view. It was not for nothing that Gioberti found it in his heart to admire even Cavour's "magnanimous error" in treating a province as if it were the nation, when he compared it with the "mean spirit" of those who "treated the nation as if it were a province."

This general tendency among politicians meant that when the question of the kingdom's administrative organization and forms of government arose the systems proposed were not derived from Italy's antecedents and life. Instead they were the natural expression of this state of mind, a queer compound of foreign borrowings and foreign adaptations, of undigested ideas and alien traditions, selected more or less according to the intellectual fashions of the day and grouped arbitrarily together in the hope that they would coalesce into a satisfactory whole. Thus the form of the constitution was settled by merely extending the Statuto of Piedmont to the whole peninsula—whence the witticism that "Italy found herself endowed with a constitution imitated from Britain imported in a bad French translation"; a witticism neither true nor fair in a literal sense, but a sound commentary on the statesmen's view that foreign institutions could be imported ready-made regardless of the national soil and historical context that had produced them. Actually the Statuto was by no means so defective an instrument as later critics branded it. Liberal only in a limited and decidedly conservative sense it had still the supreme merit of flexibility and was capable of increasingly democratic interpretation without fundamental change in its text. Even in the next decades, events showed that its real meaning depended on the spirit which those who were operating it desired it to express, and its formal terms came to constitute less a rigid instrument of government than a formal body of doctrine to be modified and moulded by experience.²⁶ But its extension from Piedmont to the whole of Italy at this time was made pernicious by the intolerant manner in which the extension was carried out and the system of administrative government which was almost immediately set

up to accompany it. An unfortunate dread of regionalism and local autonomy as factors subversive of unity led men to invoke centralization as a guarantee of cohesion, and as an insurance against the forces of disintegration. Because the struggle for existence was still so intense, the most absorbing necessity of the moment seemed to be an organization that would, however brusquely and temporarily, guarantee the continued existence of the State. Constitution, legislation, administration were regarded almost in the light of fortifications against a return to the former régime, and were hastily constructed in the shadow of the Austrian menace. Hence the gradual conversion of an intolerant tendency into a fixed policy; hence the cutting of the Gordian knot of regionalism when it so plainly required untying; hence the deliberate divorce of united Italy from the past of old Italy with its cultural and communal values. Fear of the unknown, distrust of old loyalties and old ties of sentiment led men to confuse unity with uniformity, and to think that it was necessary for Italy to be made a *tabula rasa*, before it could be made a nation. Sweeping changes were introduced overnight, the country's most ancient institutions were demolished, and Italians were surprised by a shower of new legislation that they did not understand, and that seemed to them to have little meaning beyond satisfaction of Piedmont's desire for hegemony.²⁷

The latter, indeed, was almost as important an element in the psychology of the time as the instinctive repulsion to regionalism. Because Piedmont had taken the initiative and assumed the chief burdens in the national struggle, her statesmen were disposed to treat the fusion of Italy and Piedmont rather as the consolidation of a "royal conquest" than as the union of equal associates in a common enterprise.²⁸ The new laws were not only alien to the provinces, but were imposed on them from without, as though Piedmontese administration and institutions were somehow the complement of liberty and the corollary of the Statuto.²⁹ Cavour stood almost alone in supporting decentralization, and even he allowed his judgment to be clouded by the panic of the time. The over-hasty communal and provincial legislation proposed by Rattazzi was passed without real reflection, and to the parliamentary

system on the French model already provided for in the Statuto there was linked an oppressive local administration founded (with unerring selective genius) on the worst features in the French and Belgian systems. In place of the diverse communal traditions which had flourished so proudly in Tuscany and Lombardy, there was established a uniform bureaucratic system, uniform administrative formulae, and an identical set of laws. From one end of the peninsula to the other public life was forced into one mould and public affairs very often put under the control of officials imported from the North, men trained in the uncompromising standards of the Piedmontese bureaucracy, unflinchingly honest, upright and efficient, but wanting in imagination, and hampered by excessive devotion to routine.

It is not surprising that in these early years there were outbursts of revolt, instinctive movements of protest, and a general fire of discontent such as leapt into flame in the Palermo risings and smouldered in the protracted brigandage of the South. By a stroke of irony Tuscans, Lombards, Romans, and Sicilians found themselves at last presented with an issue on which they could agree, and in grumbling over the new order showed that unanimity of sentiment which the statesmen had vainly invoked for their ideal. Nearly every aspect of the new life seemed to justify pessimism. Social conditions such that men flinched from their perception; regional difference so marked as to mean a difference in degree of civilization between North and South; political thought so abstract as to provide no thought-forms for the new national life; finally, a political structure so clumsy and incongruous that the limbs of the State seemed encased in splints and all movement effectually obstructed—the catalogue was a depressing one and did not seem hopeful for the future of "modern Italy."

The monarchy, invoked so often as a rallying-point of sentiment, could as yet hardly be reckoned as a source of strength. By 1871 it was at least firmly established, but it was still alien to the mass of the people—an importation from that Piedmontese State whose attempt to mould Italy in its own image was already the cause of so much heart-burning and

dismay. It is true that Vittorio-Emmanuele the *re galantuomo* enjoyed the greatest personal popularity, but this personal affection for the man could not be equated with general loyalty and respect for the institution. There was little in Italian history to make Italian monarchists, and the events of the last decades had shown the weakness of the tie between the hereditary rulers and their subjects.³⁰ Since the initiation of the struggle for liberty the people had seen six different dynasties quietly deposed, and with few exceptions the deposition had not even aroused popular interest. The concept of monarchy did not seem to have penetrated Italians' consciousness, and where it had, the very obvious fact that the House of Savoy had won the crown of Italy by usurping the sovereignty of six princes could logically only have been interpreted as a violation of the monarchical principle and not as its legitimate expression. More than a decade was necessary before the King seemed a national reality to the majority of his subjects, and more than a generation before he could make an instinctive appeal to their emotions.

Meanwhile the kingdom remained more or less unstable, according to the urgency of the problems it was called on to face. This partly explains the queer scepticism and disillusionment which appeared in the 'sixties and 'seventies in intellectual circles. Men had expected too much, and the depth of their expectation was the measure of their despair. They found their faith in the new State vitiated at its roots, and their pride struck down before it had strength enough to rise. Watching the last stages in the struggle for unity, they were almost imperceptibly converted to the view that the Risorgimento was over and that "to the age of poetry had succeeded the age of prose," somehow less worthy and less significant than its predecessor. Indeed, by a coincidence the end of the conflict against Austria reflected little glory on the Italian arms. The defeats of Lissa and Custozza caused a feeling of bitter humiliation which ate like an acid into the spirit of the nation, changing the old pride in national heroism into cynical distaste for national failure, and inflicting a severe blow on the already slender store of national self-confidence. Actually neither battle was the disgrace it was felt to be; but the nation

was too young and diffident to estimate such defeats at their true value, and it could neither forget nor forgive itself the humiliation of receiving Venice as the result of the victories of Prussia. The occupation of Rome, moreover—an occupation accomplished in a cautious spirit of opportunism—seemed like a tacit denial of the heroic ethic of those who in 1862 and 1867 had unflinchingly faced the papal arms or the chassepots of France and laid down their lives with the cry of "Rome or death." Carducci (perhaps better than he knew) expressed the exaggerated self-disillusionment of the time in his picture of Italy mounting the steps of the Campidoglio—Italy that should have regained her capital in a blaze of glory, and was actually entering it only after the withdrawal of the French troops.

"Zitte! Zitte! Che e questo frastuono
al lume de la luna?
Oche del Campidoglio, zitte! Io sono
L'Italia grande e una."

("Be silent—what is this noise in the light of the moon? Geese of the Capitol, be silent—it is I, Italy, great and united.")³¹

The Roman question formed, as it were, the centre point for the forces of resentment and pessimism that had been accumulating under the rule of the united provisional government. A-political as the general populace was, indifferent and passive where most public issues were concerned, Garibaldi's exploits and character had fired the imagination of at least an important minority and won a response wherever spirit was to be found. Nothing had more embittered this minority than the episodes of Aspromonte and Mentana—the suppression of Garibaldi's expedition by Italian troops, his wound by an "Italian bullet," and his ignominious dismissal to Caprera by the Italian Government. It made no difference that Garibaldi had actually been in the position of a rebel against that Government; that he had defied the Prime Minister's orders to withdraw; and that the international situation put the failure of his enterprise beyond question. Popular imagination saw only the hero of two worlds injured by his own countrymen

while serving in a national cause; and however the formal taking of Rome might gratify popular ambition, it could not wipe out the misunderstanding, the antagonism and mistrust, which the former event had aroused.³²

These were, indeed, also the products of psychological conditions stretching far back into the last centuries and were symptomatic of the fatal dualism between governed and government inherent in all Italian history—a dualism that had temporarily disappeared in the first glamour of unity, but was quick to re-emerge once the glamour had begun to wear thin. There was actually no more disintegrating element in the new synthesis than the ingrained Italian habit, inherited from the epoch of foreign overlordship and absolutism, of considering all or any government as an enemy.³³ For generations the citizens of the old historical states had been trained in an attitude of destructive criticism towards their rulers, had grown up in a tradition of quasi-active discontent, with little idea of political change beyond violent overthrow of unpalatable despotic systems. From such a public little tolerance of governmental trimmings could be expected; and given one initial check to the early impulse of goodwill, it followed almost logically that the united Italian Government should be forced into the position of the old autocratic régimes, regarded not as the mandatory of the collective will of the nation, but as a remote and alien entity whose activities were to be judged in a spirit of cold and somewhat hostile detachment.³⁴

Linked with this, moreover, was the other aspect of the Roman question—the difficult problem of reconciling the Pope to the loss of his temporal power—a problem undermining the foundations of national security, and acting as a meeting-place for the varied currents of discontent, ranging from anti-clericalism and papalism to republicanism and Garibaldianism. It, too, meant psychological strain and a continual attack on the equilibrium of the State, provoking the enmity of Catholic powers abroad and a conflict of conscience among the Catholic population at home. Theoretically, of course, Cavour's principle of a free Church in a free State should have eased the tension and made possible a certain working agreement; but agreement was put out of the question by the unforeseen

discord that arose over the instrument that was to have established it. The Law of Guarantees had been formulated on the implicit assumption that the Church would either tacitly co-operate with the State, or at least passively recognize the *status quo*. No one had quite envisaged the results of a Law of Guarantees that was rejected by the Church but remained binding on the State. It was an anomaly which few could regard with equanimity and none with enthusiasm—least of all the progressive secular party, who saw their own hands tied while those of their adversaries were chivalrously, but naively, left free. The position, in fact, could hardly have been more openly in defiance of common sense—the capital of a great nation being made the stronghold of a government hostile to it by tradition and firmly bent on denying its existence. No wonder that a second cleavage was added to the cleavage already existing between Government and people; or that the vague currents of antipathy and discontent already circulating among the masses found a magnetic centre in the organized ill-will of the clergy.

Still, despite the difficulties implicit in the religious, social, and political questions, none of them provided the most persistently weak element in the situation, nor the most fundamental cause of distress. The Pope might thunder excommunications from the Vatican, the edifice of the State might be clumsily built, and the cultural condition of the people such that only five out of twenty-five millions were literate; but the kingdom survived. All these things could be overcome. What really tested the existence of the State was the economic question. Economic and financial difficulties stood out rigidly against the changing background of political expedients and subterfuges—concrete realities that could neither be camouflaged nor left to the future for solution. They were indeed the omnipresent and determining elements in any political decision, checking even such poor efforts as were thought of in connection with social reform, making and unmaking the lives of Cabinets, and presiding tyrannically over the discussions of Parliament.

Curiously enough, the economic question with its burden of national suffering came as a shock to nearly all elements of

the nation. No one, not even the politicians, had foreseen it, partly because nearly everyone in the new kingdom was ignorant of economic matters, and even more because in the early days of union an extraordinary optimism had prevailed concerning Italy's material and economic resources.³⁵ Rising to success on a tide of rhetoric the men of the Risorgimento had viewed the physical features of the country (no less than the character and conditions of the people) entirely in the light of their own prepossessions, raising a paean of praise over the beauties of the landscape, but never evaluating it in terms of economics. The view of Italy as the "garden of Europe" had filled the horizon too completely for there to be any realization of its intrinsic natural poverty—its 100,000 square kilometres of sterile mountains and hills, its large tracts of marshy and malarious plainland, its semi-desert regions stricken with pellagra, and its unfavourable distribution of rivers and streams. Only a handful of individuals knew how really backward and impoverished the country was, how dependent on a primitive agriculture that in many districts had already exhausted the soil, how handicapped by its lack of coal and mineral wealth. No more painful contrast could be imagined than the contrast between the Italy of the patriots' dreams—the land overflowing with wealth and stored with potential riches—and the Italy of reality, so ill-equipped by nature and its immediate history for meeting the material exigencies of the situation. Communications were both scanty and bad; although a beginning had been made with railway construction in the North and South, the peninsula boasted few kilometres of completed railroad, while the number of roads was insufficient and their condition often impassable. Public works were wanting; harbours, despite an indented coastline that should have made them a source of strength, were undeveloped or in urgent need of repair; industry was only embryonic, and the capital necessary to fertilize its growth lacking. Finally, there existed almost as little the elements of a class capable of building up the economic structure of the country as there existed the elements capable of building up the political structure, the middle classes being as hampered in this field by their general deficiency in technical knowledge (or adminis-

trative experience) as they were in the field of politics, and even apart from that, having little capacity for co-ordinating their activities in the attainment of common ends.

Such being the material condition of the country, the exhaustion produced by the long period of protracted wars and violent interruptions of trade was serious. Almost everywhere the first years of unity meant economic hardship and in the South almost destitution. There were the years of the development of the Southern question, when the removal of trade barriers between North and South violently disrupted the South's economic life, killed its old protected industries, and crushed its system of trade. Repeated crises and depression in the kingdom drew forth a torrent of reproach, and hasty comparisons with the days of the old régime culminated in the bitter comment that went ringing down the parliamentary life of the next decades: "We were better off when we were worse off . . ." a comment that at least so far as the masses and petit bourgeois were concerned had some real foundation of truth, for the dead level of poverty in Italy was very great. The whole taxable income of the country real and personal reached only the small figure of two and a half milliard lire; and the income-tax returns showed that of the heads of families only one in four had an income exceeding 250 lire.³⁶ Nor did there exist even a large class of moderately well-to-do people, since in 1868 Sella calculated that out of the total population of 25 million only 33,000 individuals or corporations were in possession of an income exceeding £400 a year.³⁷

Added to this general poverty was the question of the expense involved in the achievement of unity and in the work of building up a modern state. Expenditure of public money on a vast scale was inevitable and could not be avoided when it came to creating an army and navy, railways and communications, public works and education; and all these and other branches of State life formed a continual and heavy drain on the national purse, extracting from it year by year sums far in excess of what the nation could afford. "We are," said Rattazzi grimly, "beggars in the garb of hidalgos." And the comment was just. Italy's financial future had to be mortgaged and mortgaged again to stand the strain; and

notwithstanding all that was done it remained a country in which with every decade individual and collective needs outmeasured to an overwhelming degree the means by which they could be satisfied. A mounting public debt that assumed enormous proportions and soared beyond reach of control; a system of taxation that burdened the population to the limits of endurance; finally, an ever-present threat of national bankruptcy that prevented confidence and involved financial questions in an atmosphere of doubt and anxiety; these were the most incurable evils in Italy after 1859, and until 1876 they took first place in the life of the State as a whole.

Thus so far as the main aspects of her existence were concerned, Italy in 1871 could hardly look forward to a prosperous future. The debit side of her national ledger predominated alarmingly over the credit side: and her statesmen, surveying the complex mass of problems they were supposed to resolve into a modern state, might reasonably have felt dismayed. Social, political, religious, psychological and economic discontent—it was a series of variations on the same theme, and of the nature of the theme there could be no doubt. How to weld the elements of the nation into a whole, how allay their grievous sense of injury and yet serve the best interests of the State—they were questions that would have taxed the genius of Cavour himself to answer. And Cavour was dead. None of his successors could measure up to his greatness. Well-meaning men, they based their actions on an old-fashioned philosophy, and were surprised to find that the State's array of handicaps did not lessen, and that its few reserves of strength could be so easily and casually dissipated.

And yet given these dark sides to the picture, there was still a quality in the new Italy—easier to feel than to define—which could be set against the material difficulties. The spirit of the nation, so often repressed and frustrated, was nevertheless still the spirit that in the fifteenth century had liberated the mind of Europe, and in the Renaissance given European art its most supreme and universal expression. Behind the artificial and vacillating consciousness of the new Italy was the rich subconscious genius of the old Italy, timeless in

inspiration, indomitable in resistance, impregnated with the pride and tradition of Rome. All that was lacking was a link between past and present, a reintegration of the two parts of Italy's personality, the establishment of harmony between her new external life with its superimposed foreign motives, its abstractions and stereotyped forms, and her natural subjective existence. Given time there was no reason why the two should not slowly fuse into one, and Italy regain possession of herself with the stability and greatness the reconquest implied. Everything depended on the time question, on whether the nation, asked to digest the experience of ten centuries in ten years, could regain sufficient sense of balance to make the necessary readjustment. Compared to the quiet methodical evolution of France and England, slowly acquiring and deepening their national consciousness from century to century and building up a sense of national solidarity, the brilliant meteoric rise of Italy seemed a freak of fate, a chance phenomenon that would disappear as rapidly as it had appeared. All over Europe the other landmarks of the age were going. The era of nationalist and liberal movements—movements begun so gallantly among the subject peoples during the first half of the century—seemed over. Authoritarianism had triumphed with Bismarck at Sedan; and with the rise of Bismarckianism, Liberalism was passing more and more into eclipse. "When Italy was made, the intellectual and political world which had made her formation possible was dissolving," wrote de Sanctis, surveying the Italy of 1871.³⁸ And indeed the new Italy found herself in an alien atmosphere, surrounded by powers that looked at her askance and demanded rather military credentials than liberal principles. Hence the double dilemma of the new kingdom: divided equally from herself and from her associates, supposed Minerva-like to spring into the nationalist world equipped with all the technique and weapons of a modern expansionist state.

THE ANATOMY OF POLITICS AND THE RULE OF THE RIGHT

THE Parliament which began its sessions at Rome in November 1871 was not the first Parliament of United Italy. Since the kingdom had been proclaimed in 1861, four Parliaments had met, first at Turin, and then at Florence, and the transference to Rome did not mean an essential change in the character of parliamentary institutions. The horizon of the deputies was perhaps enlarged, and the work of government made more complicated, but there was little alteration in methods of government, or in the regulation of the State's ordinary life. The Constitution outlined in the Statuto was adhered to, and the formal completion of unity meant simply a final confirmation of its terms. It provided for a monarchical state in which the King had more power than is usually allowed a constitutional monarch, with the right to appoint the premier (and to do so much at his own discretion) and such degree of control over his ministers as to be able to dismiss them irrespective of their relations with the legislative houses.¹ He was not obliged to follow the advice of his ministers in all fields of policy, and in foreign affairs he was, in practice at least, given considerable scope for the exercise of personal influence. Nominally also, he was endowed with an important power of veto, but actually this was rarely or never used: just as actually the power of the working executive remained essentially in the hands of the ministers, and it was they who concluded treaties, made appointments to the offices of State, approved and promulgated laws, etc. In short, the Cabinet and the Cabinet system functioned very much along the lines of the Cabinet system in England, and though the King on paper had many ways of interfering with its working, the House of Savoy adhered almost invariably to a principle of non-interference.

The real legislative power in the kingdom lay with Parliament, which, in accordance with the Statuto, was divided into

two houses, an Upper—the Senate), and a Lower—the Camera dei Deputati). The Senate was composed of distinguished persons nominated by the Crown, and appointed for life—a fact which gave rise to much subsequent grumbling and a somewhat contemptuous view of it as a refuge for senile public functionaries whom the State might wish to reward.² Its membership was not limited, and rose from 78 in 1848 to over 200 some decades later, the King being free to make as many appointments as he wished, provided his nominees were at least forty years of age and drawn from certain specified classes of citizens—broadly speaking from among eminent officials of Church and State, persons of recognized scientific or literary fame or otherwise distinguished by their intellectual qualifications, or, finally, citizens who for at least three years had paid direct taxes amounting to 3,000 lire. With these membership qualifications, it was inevitably a conservative and even reactionary body, generally inimical to change of any kind, and inclined to distrust any liberalism shown by the Lower House. With all its rigidity, however, it failed to be either particularly effective or even very influential. It rarely exerted real power and such changes as it made in the Bills sent to it by the Camera dei Deputati had a legal rather than a political importance.³ On rare occasions it opposed the measures which it was called on to discuss (for instance in 1878–80 it refused to abolish the famous grist-tax),⁴ but such opposition was rarely persistent, while so far as initiating laws was concerned, it could claim to have originated only thirty-nine in the whole period between 1861 and 1910.⁵ Apart from this, moreover, in later years it was often “packed” with the object of securing acceptance of the Government’s proposals, and royal nomination came to mean nomination by the Ministry with a majority in the Camera dei Deputati.⁶ To swamp the opposition by creating a group of new senators was an accepted feature of political life, and its effects were seen in 1886 when 41 appointments were made of this type, and again in 1890, when there were 75, and in 1892 when there were 42.⁷

The Camera dei Deputati, or Lower House, consisted of 508 Members elected on a limited franchise for five years.⁸ It was, however, exceptional for any house to survive its full

period, dissolutions being fairly frequent and the average length of term being less than three years. As regards the president, he was at first elected on a partisan basis, but later when the English conception of the Speaker's function had become popular, was simply selected from among the most competent deputies, without attention being paid to his party affiliations. The procedure of the House was very much like that of the French Chamber, including the custom both of interpellation and of commissions. What chiefly differentiated the Italian House from the French was the character of the parties and the peculiar atmosphere which surrounded them.

The dominant fact in the political life of the time was indeed the peculiar character of the parties—if indeed they could be called parties, for they were not parties in the accepted sense of the term and had no political organization in the country. Made up of a combination of groups and factions, groups more or less ill-defined, and continually coalescing or dissolving into a variety of new forms, they represented traditional tendencies rather than compact organisms and gathered round the personality of a leader instead of programmes or principles.⁹ The two main tendencies were Right and Left, since the smaller abstentionist groups such as the Roman Catholic and the irreconcilable Republicans remained apart from public life and had no share in its direction; but even between Right and Left the line of division was an uncertain and fluctuating one. Both had a common origin and were divided less by at question of aims and objectives than by a question of methods.¹⁰ For both had wanted the revolution against Austria and both had fought for it, differing only in their particular convictions as to the best plan of campaign and the best diplomatic approach. The Right, more logical and realistic than the Left, had seen Italian independence as a thing that could not be divorced from the context of European politics; the Left, more impulsive and romantic, had hoped to achieve it in isolation and by a vigorous display of action. Philosophical or theoretical considerations had had a secondary place in their disputes, and indeed the circumstances under which united Italy had been created were against either the establishment of clear political theories or the rise of closely integrated

parties. During the period of the struggle for existence everything had centred on the one problem of bringing Italy into being: and those who had desired national unity (though they might quarrel vehemently over the means of achieving it) had had at least to sink their differences of doctrine and enter into collaboration with their political opponents. Federalists had had to become converted to unitarianism, republicans to monarchism, regionalists to centralism, and conservatives to liberalism—in short, it had been necessary to compromise on innumerable questions of conviction and faith and to subordinate belief in particular systems to belief in a national state.¹¹ As a result a general looseness of conviction had become characteristic of political life, and with it a general confusion as to what was really conservative, liberal and democratic—as though the general spirit of settling only such questions as could not be postponed had vitiated the significance of political principles and made men suspicious of rigid adherence to them.¹²

With the actual achievement of unity the necessity for such compromise and procrastination was removed. But by a curious paradox the parties were no sooner free to disagree than they had difficulty in finding real material for disagreement,¹³ and perpetuated the habit of compromise as a refuge from their own vagueness of mind. What had formerly been patriotic co-operation between men of different principles, in the 'seventies not infrequently became opportunist coalition between men of flexible opinions; and the initial similarity of outlook between Left and Right, from serving as a basis for practical agreement, gradually hardened into a barrier against original thought. In a sense, the fact that both were Liberals helped to explain their inability to develop different programmes. Except on certain specific questions, such as Irredentism and the franchise and the Church, their ideas were often strikingly similar, and even on these points their divergence was very largely a matter of time and occasion, determined more by their personal character than by abstract ideas. For the Right, being drawn to a great extent from persons of established family and position, had naturally more links with the old order, and so tended to be conservative by instinct

and liberal only by necessity; whereas the Left had an innate tendency to radicalism and an intuitive sympathy with a régime as young as itself. A real philosophical difference between them might perhaps have been created if the irreconcilable clerical element had been represented in Parliament, since it would at once have typified the old Italy and challenged the new.¹⁴ But the great majority of the Papalists even at this date supported the formula of "*no electors, no elected*,"¹⁵ and this meant that the vague mass of Liberals could occupy the field of practical politics without troubling to organize their forces, formulate their programmes, and define their ideas. Power was theirs, and the very knowledge that it was so, encouraged them to quarrel trivially among themselves and to waste on petty differences of routine the energy they might have reserved for the construction of national life. Lacking the ferment of opposition, there was a general want of vigour in parliamentary life and a spirit of easy-going lethargy that often found more satisfaction in putting off difficulties than in seeking to resolve them.¹⁶ Hence the lack of well-thought-out and fundamental conceptions regarding the best means of organizing the State; and hence the lack of real agreement regarding political policy between such men as Lanza, Minghetti, Sella, and La Marmora—men who, despite their claim to be the heirs of Cavour ("generals of Alexander," as Ferrari ironically put it), were unable to reproduce either his decisive direction of affairs or his clearness of political purpose.

The general tendency to disintegration or lack of cohesive principle among the parties was helped by the phenomenon of factionism inherent in Italian history. The groups and sects that did so much to vitiate parliamentary life had in essence existed long before the nineteenth century. Already in the Middle Ages party feeling in the Italian city states had been so bitter that Guelphs had ruthlessly exiled Ghibellines, and the smaller rival groups in the towns had imprisoned or driven out their opponents almost as a matter of principle. The general practice, and above all the spirit it denoted, had been branded as a national evil by Dante no less than Foscolo. "To make Italy you must unmake the sects," the latter had

written prophetically, and his phrase was still current after the Risorgimento, when de Sanctis observed that the "sectarian spirit is like a virus in the blood of the nation."¹⁷ Lack of clear political convictions was only one aspect of it and only one cause of its origin. With it there went such factors as exaggerated geographical and regional loyalties, personal rivalries, opportunist ambitions—all elements that in 1871 were still the cause of bitter enmities in Parliament, and were quite sufficient to undermine the discussion of public questions, ruin a good political cause, and bring about the downfall of a ministry. "You cannot govern on the point of a needle" was Cavour's criticism of the sects and groups that made a stable majority impossible: and even the party of the Right, despite its general disinterestedness, was so intrinsically disunited that the two most prominent leaders, Sella and Minghetti, were never members of the same Cabinet, and on several occasions stood idly by while Ministries of their own party were being overthrown on trivial grounds, and replaced by others equally unstable.¹⁸

Regional feelings probably had almost more share in creating disunity than other factors, for regional independence was still peculiarly characteristic not only of the Italian kingdom but of the spirit and values of Italian civilization. The establishment of the political capital at Rome had not destroyed the social and intellectual inspiration of Milan, Florence, Turin, Naples, and Palermo. In essence these cities retained the marked individuality and attractive power which had been theirs during the Renaissance, when they had seemed so many brilliant torches flaring individually on the darkness of the Middle Ages. The trend of liberal and political thought still gravitated towards Milan; the impulse to artistic creation still came from Florence; and Naples still held its own as the centre of philosophy and free speculation. Nor were cross currents of interest lacking elsewhere. Bologna, already made pre-eminent in the intellectual field by its university, at this time also enjoyed the honour of Carducci's teaching, and Carducci was acknowledged the greatest Italian poet of the age. Venice was a centre of cultural activity of all kinds, with perhaps a bias towards music. And as for Siena, Pisa, and

Verona (towns insignificant in population and size), they also claimed a place in the national synthesis in virtue of artistic talent and an architectural beauty that made them still the objects not only of national but European pilgrimage.

So much regional vitality constituted, it is true, a source of great potential energy to the nation, but undisciplined by a feeling of general collaboration it was liable to disintegrate the pattern of collective life and result in a curious form of political dissolution. As late as 1910 this point was very clearly expressed by Sighele when he wrote: "The Englishman, the Frenchman, the German are, above and beyond all, English, French, and German: the Italian is, above and beyond all, a Southerner or a Northerner, a Milanese or a Neapolitan, a Venetian or a Calabrian . . . and, when he has clearly affirmed his origin and exalted his province above others, then . . . he remembers that he is also an Italian. We have, it is true, our national pride; but it is a rhetorical and verbal pride which serves only on great occasions for speeches. . . . The only sincere, intimate, and stable pride which dominates our feelings and our brain, which inspires our everyday life, which guides our interests and determines the direction of our affairs, is regional and provincial pride. We do not conceive political life, representation, or parliament as other than places and means by which we may render prosperous the city to which we belong . . . render them prosperous in despite of other regions and cities."¹⁹ In short, there existed much the same strong feeling of local character as had once found artistic expression in the Venetian, Umbrian, and Tuscan schools of painting . . . a feeling which, transferred to the sphere of government, was liable to produce something like Tuscan, Venetian, and Sicilian schools of policy. Indeed, the separation it implied was clearly visible in the political parties, since the Right, composed mainly of Tuscans, Piedmontese and Lombards, nourished a hardly veiled contempt for the South, while the Left, composed mainly of Southerners, bitterly resented the attitude of the North. Each knew that the other had strong particularist sympathies, and each was nervously anxious to defend its own regional interests against unjustified suppression or subordination to the interests of the whole. Recriminations

could be easily started, and since fresh sources of discontent were not lacking, and neither side was disposed to be tolerant, their ill-feeling provided a perpetual source of friction.²⁰ Besides this general jealousy between North and South, moreover, the jealousy between the individual provinces was always evident, deputies from Sicily looking askance at those from Naples, Piedmontese distrusting Lombards, and both suspected by Tuscans. Such rivalries cut across the external line of party divisions, disrupting each party from within and subdividing it into yet smaller and mutually antipathetic sections.²¹ In the formation of ministries, it was necessary to distribute portfolios not only according to the merits of the individual deputies, but according to the importance of their respective provinces, for fear lest a regional coalition combine to defeat the Cabinet; and it was well known that if by some coincidence a Cabinet had been formed composed of men born in one part of Italy it would have had scant chance of survival.²² The potential effect of such particularism on national interests was seen in 1876, when the Tuscans, whose provincial loyalties were stronger than their political principles, deliberately voted the downfall of their own party (the Right) because they thought that in transferring the capital from Florence to Rome adequate compensation had not been given to Florence.²³

Episodes of this type, and the kind of weakness they denoted in the parties, inevitably reacted badly on the composition of Parliament and on its ability to deal with public affairs. Absence of real party discipline meant not only daily obstruction in the work of government, insecurity of office and subordination of national to regional ends, but also continual changes in the Government personnel, with a procession of ministers who in their rapid passage to and from power had barely time to develop a policy, still less watch its practical application, or profit from personal experience of its defects. The resultant variability was almost a tradition after only eight years of the Parliament's working in Rome. Instead of a stable government there was, a contemporary wrote, "nothing but a continual phantasmagoria of men coming and going, not for their special merits or demerits, but as the

instruments of a Protean game of personal influences, of groups of persons and coalitions which are born and which die, quite independently of public interest, and without the country knowing why. . . ."²⁴ Instability of government leading to mismanagement of public affairs; mismanagement of public affairs leading to discontent; discontent leading to intolerance of government policy; intolerance of government policy leading to instability of government; and so *da capo*. It was a vicious circle from which an escape became yearly more difficult, because with every year the evils it represented took firmer root. Already in the first experimental period of parliamentary government the habit of changing ministers for reasons of personal or party expediency was so well begun that the Minister for Education was changed twenty-four times in twenty years; and this was only an exaggerated instance of what took place after 1871, when for instance the department of finance was given thirty-one different ministers in forty-three years.²⁵ The fact that such changes in the direction of financial affairs were disastrous to the material well-being of the nation did not weigh against the exigencies of parliamentary strategy; and the premiers concerned nearly all preferred to see a succession of different ministers illogically and unfortunately initiating a succession of different economic and financial policies rather than fall from power themselves. In this they were perhaps justified by the inner logic of the situation, for their fall would not have changed the bases of political life, but their failure to struggle for an improvement in organization meant that each later government became more and more the prisoner of an evil it was powerless to change.

The bad effects of this system were felt not only in the administration of public affairs and the direct activities of Parliament. In the country as a whole lack of party organization retarded the political education of the masses and injured the character of the elections. For it left the choice of candidates to small local cliques, who generally secured the election of men favourable to their particular concerns—men who might possibly be good deputies, but were hardly put in power for that reason. In this way the oligarchical tendency already implicit in the character of Italian parliamentary

institutions was intensified and the deputies made to function rather as the delegates of a clique than the real representatives of the people. Selected by certain groups, voted for in a tiny electorate and on an extremely restricted franchise, they could *a priori* have little real connection with the masses and little real understanding of their needs. Italian democracy at this time was like a pyramid constructed on an inverted base; a pyramid whose point might be found among the people, but whose base was securely and firmly supported among the bourgeoisie. Of a total population of over 25 million, approximately only 600,000 had the vote, or perhaps twenty-three persons in every 1,000;²⁶ though in France the proportion was 267, in Switzerland 238, and England 52. Out of this 600,000 in Italy, furthermore, not less than one-half and usually two-thirds abstained altogether from voting—either from religious scruple, apathy, or ignorance—while a very large number of those who *did* vote were Government nominees or employees;²⁷ facts which meant that some of the deputies nominally representing electorates with 50,000 inhabitants were actually elected by only fifty or a hundred people. "In Italy," remarked Jacini, writing in 1866, "we may assume that in reality not more than 250,000 persons—i.e. less than 1 per cent of the population—have a direct share in the governmental system."²⁸

This narrow limitation of the franchise was partly justified by the psychology and condition of the masses. Universal suffrage would have meant a parliament elected by the peasants: and the politicians not only feared the peasants as an unknown quantity, but knew them for latent enemies of the new régime.²⁹ Even the democrats were aware that the rural population, endowed with electoral rights, would probably vote the reactionaries into power—partly because the country was still hardly conscious of the entity known as united Italy, partly because it was only too conscious of the united Italian Government as a tax-collecting agency, an exactor of military service, and a destroyer of regional sentiment. This mentality was in itself good reason for keeping the electorate restricted, and linked with it was the ever-present question of social and cultural backwardness. "The real Quadrilateral that has

stopped us," said Villari after the Risorgimento struggle, "is our seventeen million illiterates and our five million dilettante," and his comment was the best summary of the essential difficulties in the new political life.³⁰ Lack of real experience among the bourgeoisie, ignorance and parochialism among the people—they underlay all important issues. Indeed, the word *campanilism* was already coming into use as an expression for the latter psychology—"campanilism" meaning interests limited to the radius of the parish bell (to the detriment of all beyond it), and denoting a spirit that was to be the bane of Italian foreign policy for the next decades and earn for Italy the derisory title of *Italiotta*—little Italy.

Despite these various bad aspects of national politics, however, it would be incorrect to infer that the Parliament of 1871 was lacking in character, or that its work was not intelligently and energetically undertaken. Notwithstanding the want of cohesion among the parties, notwithstanding the Parliament's lack of experience and its continual weakening by internal conflicts, it solved the most difficult problems of the new State and secured its existence both at home and abroad. Factionism, personal interests, regional jealousies—these were evils inherited from the past which still seemed capable of being reformed; and in these early days the party of the Right, by its integrity and its spirit of devotion, did much to check the growth of scepticism and maintain the repute of parliamentary institutions. The Right indeed had been the directing force in the struggle for national unity, had been responsible for the occupation of Rome, and had regulated the relations between Church and State by means of the Law of Guarantees. Now at the beginning of the 'seventies it was ready to cope with such questions as the creation of an army and navy, the organization of public services, and the liquidation of the financial deficit which was still the paramount question in national life.³¹

As a party it counted among its members some of the most distinguished men of the day; men like Sella, Minghetti, Spavanta, Lanza, and Ricasoli; men who, whatever their blunders as practical politicians, were nevertheless patriots of unusual moral and intellectual quality.³² Their weakness as a

group was chiefly that so much of their patriotism, like their political conceptions, belonged to the age of the *Risorgimento*,³³ and was now at once an anachronism, and an impediment to the formulation of new aims. The only really modern mind among them was Quintino Sella, the Minister of Finance, who had previously been a noted mineralogist and scientist, a man widely read, and combining a hatred of phraseology with a faith in empiricism that was only too rare in the thought of the day.³⁴ It was perhaps the latter quality that kept him somewhat isolated from his colleagues, serving as the party's second, but not its first leader, subordinated to such a man as Lanza, set aside in favour of a Minghetti. Of the two latter Minghetti was the more interesting personality, artistic, versatile and subtle, nicknamed the "Siren" for his eloquence, but as characteristically unstable as he was intellectually brilliant, incapable of arriving at a firm decision so long as his imagination continued to supply him with new alternatives . . . and for this reason often vacillating where a coarser-fibred man would simply have forced his way.³⁵ In contrast to him there was Lanza, prosaic and methodical, a lawyer of the old Northern school, rigorously honest and rigorously obstinate, a "pedant on moral and oratorical stilts," as one writer cruelly and accurately remarked, a man who owed his command of the party rather to his sterling integrity than his intellectual qualities.³⁶

The first problem with which they had to deal was inevitably that of finance. Sella, at once the hero, and martyr, of the "battle of the Budget," began by concentrating his whole energy on the task of redeeming the nation's credit, and when the means necessary to achieve his end made him the most hated man in Italy, continued unswervingly on his way, disdainful of the jibes of those who would not recognize financial integrity to be a matter of national honour. His rigidity in method nevertheless typified a certain weakness in his party. For, preoccupied with the needs of the exchequer and the necessity of saving the nation from bankruptcy, he would not (like most of the Right) look at the social effects of his legislation³⁷ and tenaciously upheld a fiscal system by which taxes were exacted from an overburdened people with merciless and

growing ferocity. Given Italy's economic position, some such system was perhaps necessary, but it might have been more rationally and leniently applied.

The crux of the situation, as a later writer noted, was that the Risorgimento had cost more in money than in blood,³⁸ and as Cavour himself had foreseen, there was no alternative for Italy but to "pay and pay." When the Budgets of the seven states into which the country had previously been divided were combined, Government receipts were found to be only a little over half Government expenditure. And although each Finance Minister after 1862 tried gallantly to retrench, Budget after Budget showed the same frightening deficit. In the eight years from 1860 to 1867 the accumulated deficits amounted to a figure between three and a half and four milliards—a figure which meant that in eight years the country had spent the income of fourteen.³⁹ And despite all efforts at economy such expenditure could not be logically avoided, since union meant inevitably a great demand for public works, for railways and harbours and roads, quite apart from the expense of the new Civil Service and the cost of building up national defence. Heavy loans were needed to meet the continuous demands which were made on the Treasury, and the result was that the public debt existing in 1860 had trebled by 1867 and quadrupled in 1876. Interest on the public debt was already one-quarter of the entire national expenditure in 1864, and rose to one-third of the national expenditure in 1876.

In 1871 the worst period of taxation was already over. In the last decade the limit of the nation's taxing capacity seemed to have been reached, while the Government's retrenchments had begun to produce good effects and the expenditure for the year was only a little beyond that of 1861. But there was no possibility of giving the people a respite. The famous grist-tax ("the tax on hunger") first imposed in 1868 had still to be maintained, and Sella, faced with new expenditure on armaments and national defence, had to continue to impose new duties and taxes, increasing amongst others the land-tax, the income-tax, and the tax on manufactured goods, while Parliament and people protested, and only his unshakable resolution and fearless impartiality gained him his point. For if

he made "economy to the bone" his maxim, he tried at least to demand sacrifices on the part of all, irrespective of rank and privilege, viewing the financial struggle as a moral even more than an economic issue. So in 1864 he persuaded the King to renounce three millions on his Civil List, the ministers to cut their own salaries, and Parliament and people actually to offer him payment of their land-tax a year in advance.⁴⁰ It was the epic spirit shown by the nation on this and similar occasions that won the admiration of Luzzati and made him describe the Italian taxpayer as "the most patriotic, and the most patient, human animal known in financial history," but it was a spirit that was severely put to the test, and by nothing more than the continued exaction of the grist-tax, which became the leit-motiv of popular suffering and parliamentary conflict in the next years.

It was in fact an unusually harsh measure, since it meant the exaction of a small excise on all corn that passed through the mill, and so automatically raised the price of bread. When it was first imposed, almost half the flour mills in Italy were closed, and the Government was obliged to open State mills in order to provide for the needs of the people.⁴¹ And yet it served its purpose, and before the end of Sella's administration was bringing in to the Exchequer such an impressively large revenue that he refused to consider its removal and constantly defended its existence in Parliament, even in the face of attacks from the Left. Accused by Rattazzi in 1872 both of leading the nation to catastrophe and of being incoherent in his financial plans, he refuted the charge with ease, and successfully evaded other attacks until the next year, when the question of the Arsenal of Taranto brought about a crisis.

The crisis was far more important in its implications for the development of Italian parliamentary life than superficially appeared, for it contained most of the elements that were later to become traditional. First and most important, a dispute over the question of reconciling military expenditure, and Budget economy, arose, followed by the resignation of the Cabinet concerned and a last-minute intervention of the King with recourse to a royal decree in order to solve an embarrassing situation. The actual clash came over the sum to be spent on

constructing the Taranto Arsenal, the Government proposing an expenditure of $6\frac{1}{2}$ million lire, while the Parliamentary Commission demanded 23 million.⁴² When the latter amount was actually voted, Sella resigned, and with him the whole Lanza Cabinet. Whereupon the King, finding himself unable to replace Lanza as Premier, had perforce to ask him to remain, and purchase Sella's continued presence as Minister of Finance by a royal decree withdrawing the law for the construction of the arsenal—*withdrawing, that is to say, the law already voted by the majority of the deputies*. From the point of view of parliamentary institutions the precedent was hardly a happy one; and the Left did not hesitate to speak of it as "unconstitutional,"⁴³ until, its indignation evaporating under pressure of other interests, it consigned the whole episode to oblivion. Lanza's Cabinet was subsequently defeated on another issue; and criticism of financial policy under the succeeding Cabinet remained on much the same general and ineffective lines as before.

The new Cabinet formed by Minghetti in June was still essentially a Right Cabinet, and continued the Right's financial policy. But Minghetti, who himself took the folio of finance, showed that Sella's aim could be achieved by slightly different and more humane methods.⁴⁴ As resolute as Sella in proposing taxation, he also supported the principle of not undertaking new expenditure without first being sure of the means of paying for it⁴⁵ and struggled gallantly against a deficit which in 1874, with all his retrenchments, still threatened to total 80 million lire. Unfortunately, however, he tended to make the same mistake as Sella, dreading a radical reform of methods of taxation or changes in the application of the fiscal system, and forgetting how much more severely fiscal burdens were felt in the poverty-stricken South than in the relatively prosperous North. This neglect of regional differences, particularly, helped to bring about a vote hostile to his Cabinet in May 1876,⁴⁶ a vote which meant either Minghetti's fall or an appeal to the country. The country (or more accurately the "electoral machine," for the elections were unhesitatingly worked) confirmed the Cabinet in office on the promise of a balanced Budget for the next year; and in 1876 Minghetti had

the honour of announcing that the nation's sacrifices had at last their reward in the attainment of equilibrium, with a possible surplus of 18 million for the future.⁴⁷ It was the greatest moment since the taking of Rome: a victory like the victory of Solferino and Magenta—a victory in which the taxpayers had gallantly kept their ranks despite years of suffering and strain, and—united like an army in the face of defeat—had become the most heavily taxed people in Europe to achieve their aim.⁴⁸

A great deal of the suffering that accompanied the victory was nevertheless unnecessary. It was not merely the amount exacted from the taxpayers that crushed them, but the unequal and unjust distribution of the taxes.⁴⁹ Badly planned in the first instance, the fiscal system weighed with undue severity on precisely those classes and regions least adapted to stand the strain, so that the poor found themselves struggling to meet financial obligations which the wealthy either evaded or surmounted with ease. The income-tax, imposed on all except the very poor, was not fairly graded in ratio to means; and the land-tax (the most fundamental of all taxes in such an agricultural country) was still regulated by clumsy old-fashioned methods, relics from the time of disunity when each single state followed its own special financial principles.⁵⁰ Thus the average tax throughout Italy was lit. 3·33 per ettare, but there were provinces where the tax was much below the average and other provinces where for no valid reason the tax was startlingly above it; so, for instance, the receipts from the tax per ettare in the Neapolitan provinces and Catania were lit. 9·60, but in the province of Milan they were lit. 14·80 per ettare, while in the Tuscan provinces on the average they amounted only to lit. 2·33 per ettare. Throughout the taxation system this kind of indulgence and severity went side by side, and the occasional attempts made to equalize matters only tended to add to the confusion, because they were neither well planned nor organic in character. What was wanted was a radical reform of the whole fiscal structure, with a series of well-thought-out provisions aiming at a definite and homogeneous effect; but no one had the courage to initiate the reform—neither Sella intent on his fight with the Budget, nor Minghetti, nor Depretis, nor any of the succeeding Ministers of Finance, who,

if they exhibited reformist tendencies, found themselves unceremoniously hurled from office and their projects consigned to oblivion. Neglected and ignored, the plea for a *rimforma tributaria* was handed on from decade to decade, finding no response except promises that were never kept, and Reform Bills that passed direct from vehement parliamentary debates to dusty parliamentary archives, in company with public inquiries and the reports of Royal Commissions—all matters that somehow or other were forgotten in the heat of party strife and the continued struggle for power.

It was relations abroad that imposed the most permanent and exacting strain on the financial situation. Despite a sincere effort to keep on friendly terms with its neighbours, circumstances were such as to drive the Italian Parliament into voting sums for national defence in excess of what Italy could afford. Fear of the Pope's propaganda for the return of his lost temporal power was at the root of this nervousness, but with this there was a more special dread of active French hostility and an attack by France in the rôle of "Liberator" of the Holy Father and restorer of Rome to the Church. Despite Visconti-Venosta's formulation in 1866 of the maxim that "Italy should be always independent but never isolated," the kingdom in 1870 found itself estranged from the Great Powers on its borders, looked at askance by Austria, coldly accepted by Germany, and the object of undisguised French antipathy—an antipathy that was largely due to Italy's attitude during the Franco-Prussian War, which had pleased no one. With all its instinctive French sympathies the Government had not done enough to win France's goodwill, and on the other hand it had done enough to incur Germany's distrust.⁵¹ Relations with France were perpetually on the point of becoming strained, and French opinion persisted in regarding Italian neutrality in the war as an exhibition of "unexampled ingratitude." France, ran the argument, had notably contributed to the creation of united Italy, and Italy had requited her help by remaining inactive when her old ally was in need of support. That Italy had felt warm sympathy for France, but had been in no condition to wage war: that, moreover, she might reasonably be considered to have paid for French aid in the Risorgimento

by the cession of Nice and Savoy: was not taken into account. The French people, in the words of Ollivier, saw only a country that "had turned its back on France . . ." ⁵² whence the development of an almost traditional attitude of disdain on the part of France, coupled with a policy of administering diplomatic slights regardless of the bitterness that might ensue.

The general tension so created between the two countries was greatly increased by the behaviour of the French Clerical Party, which enjoyed considerable influence on the course of French politics after 1870. ⁵³ It was symptomatic of the trend of events in the next five years that official expressions of goodwill on the part of French governments nearly always alternated with a series of aggressive and violent agitations on the part of the Clericals, who time and again seemed on the point of converting the Government to a policy of at least diplomatic intervention on the Vatican's behalf. Thus, for instance, the effect of a reassuring message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Favre) was vitiated by the shock of the French Government subsequently accrediting a special ambassador to the Holy See and allowing the French clergy to collect thousands of signatures for pro-papal petitions to the National Assembly intended to obtain its support for the Pope. ⁵⁴ Incidents such as these, even without the number of hostile references to Italy made in the French parliamentary debates, could only rouse mistrust and inevitably react on the Italian estimates for the army and navy budgets. They explain the Government's nervous proposal as early as 1870 to spend 100 million lire on reinforcing the Alpine passes near the French border; and they explain the state of uneasiness revealed in the debates on the Budget for National Defence in March 1873, when even a deputy disposed to believe in French pacificism warned the Camera of the danger that might result from the Vatican's appeals to powers abroad. ⁵⁵ By this date, indeed, the official view was that while intercourse with the French Government showed it to be anxious to remove causes of misunderstanding, the situation provided no guarantee that the "French Government would be strong enough to control the pro-Vatican

intrigues of the Clerical Party either in, or outside, the French Chamber."

"L'Italie se sent menacée à la fin de l'existence," wrote a friendly French publicist, and as the next years brought only intermittent slackening of the tension, the Italian Government felt itself driven to look for support abroad. "We must not be alone in any circumstances, that is the true policy to pursue," wrote Dina, and public sentiment was already turning, however reluctantly and slowly, to an alliance with Germany.⁵⁶ There was much to draw the two countries together. A common suspicion of France, a common necessity to curb the Vatican's pretensions to interfere in the life of the State, a certain reciprocity of economic interests—all factors adapted to form the basis of an alliance and counteract Italy's persistent feeling of racial affinity with France.

This feeling was not easy to counteract. French ways of living and thinking were precisely those that the Italians understood. They paid tribute to the perfection of French civilization, not in any spirit of subservience, but with the spontaneous delight of men recognizing the glories attained by a kindred genius. Paris was for them the centre of a common world, the focal point of the artistic values which they instinctively accepted in poetry, in literature, music, and general thought. While political interests temporarily divided the two countries, cultural interests permanently united their peoples. It was no accident that Italian poets responded with extraordinary sensitiveness to the vicissitudes of French history, that Manzoni wrote *Il cinque maggio* for the death of Napoleon, or that Carducci, inspired to write a revolutionary poem, found his inspiration in 1789 and produced *Ça ira*. Such small facts indicated a permanent trend in the life of the country as a whole, and its persistence was shown again, later, when both D'Annunzio and Marinetti chose French as the language for some of their most interesting art.

Even at this time, despite the contemporary friction between the two countries and despite the attitude of the French clericals, many of the most distinguished Italian statesmen remained essentially Francophile at heart. And the struggle between their instinctive sympathies and their recognition of

the State's opposing interests constituted one of the most typical and persistent weaknesses of Italian foreign policy for the next forty years. International relations, instead of being considered from a national point of view, were too often thought of in terms of the politicians' personal sentiments, or in terms of the effect they might have on party politics. "In Italy" (as a distinguished publicist wrote later) "there are Germanophiles and Germanophobes, Francophiles and Francophobes, etc. . . . men, that is to say, inspired by sympathy or antipathy towards this or that nation. . . . The tendency towards one system of international relationships rather than towards another is thus determined by sentimental impulses. . . ."⁵⁷ Generally speaking, the democratic Left lent to France because it was the home of their rationalist philosophy, the nation of the principles of 1789, the disseminator of European liberalism; while a section of the Right and of the conservatives looked to Germany as representing those principles of authoritarianism and militarism which seemed to them essential to the life of the State. Sometimes in this early period these attitudes were reversed, and the Left showed a (temporary) tendency towards Germany because of its struggle against the Catholic Church, while the Right found a *rapprochement* with France necessary to a non-aggressive ecclesiastical policy. But on the whole the tendency was clearly for the Left to promote Italian-French friendship, while a section of monarchists and the Right favoured first the establishment of the alliance with Germany, and later, after it had become unpopular, its maintenance even in the face of discontent. The direction of the Right and Left's respective tendencies, however, was not so important as the division the tendencies implied and the vacillation which it produced in the formation of Italy's relations abroad. So long as the nation continued to waver between the two, her international position was bound to remain insecure and her interests be slighted. "To be suspected at Berlin, despised at Paris, and badly treated everywhere—this is the bitter fruit which Italy has gained from a vacillating policy . . ." said Crispi a few years later, and his analysis represented no more than the truth.⁵⁸ It was therefore particularly unfortunate that the Marquis Visconti-Venosta, the first Foreign Minister after

the change to Rome, should not have been the man either to resolve the dissension or leave behind him a stable tradition.

Polished, elegant, and discreet, with a considerable gift for irony in debate, Visconti-Venosta was indolent in decision and lacking in initiative. "Wise inertia" was his motto—a motto that had many virtues for so young and defenceless a power, but could scarcely establish Italy's prestige or attract her useful allies.⁵⁹ It was characteristic of him that he refused to be shaken in his serenity by the growing tension with France, continuing to try and bring about its relaxation while at the same time responding discreetly to the overtures of friendship offered by Germany. Questioned on 14th May, 1872, regarding Italy's relations with France, he declared calmly that they were "friendly and very satisfactory," and questioned again regarding Germany, added "Italy's relations with Germany are excellent and could not be desired better."⁶⁰ The replies were typical of his view that Italy should maintain equally benevolent relations with both countries, but it met with sharp criticism in the Camera, more especially on the part of the Left, who found an attitude of general benevolence maintained in the face of ill-will somewhat derogatory to Italy's dignity. Miceli (a Left Deputy of standing) summed up much prevailing discontent when he declared the Right's whole policy to be "cowardly" and "humiliating," and again three years later (1875) when he rebuked the Right and its agents abroad with "excessive tenderness" towards France.⁶¹

The rebuke was not quite a fair one. Given Italy's general condition and the King's warm personal attachment to France, a "strong" policy was out of the question. The weak point in Visconti-Venosta's diplomacy was rather that he did not know how to draw profit from tacit agreements abroad, or insinuate Italy's interests into the context of changing international understandings, as Cavour had done under far more difficult circumstances. Thus, for instance, an event which might have been of real value to Italy—Vittorio-Emanuele's visit to the Austrian Emperor in Vienna and the Kaiser in Berlin—did not really have the good effects that had been hoped from it, and produced in Visconti-Venosta and Minghetti (who accompanied the King) almost a feeling of dis-

illusionment, as if, issuing from the limits of their country, they were suddenly aware of political realities not previously understood.⁶² Neither was able to see eye to eye with Bismarck on the questions under discussion,⁶³ and the visit, though it strengthened Italy's intangible friendship with Germany, left it none the less intangible. Such material profit as did accrue from it, was visible only in 1875, when by way of return Francis-Joseph came as the King's guest to Venice, and Wilhelm I to Milan. Notwithstanding the significant fact that both Emperors avoided setting foot in Rome out of regard for papal susceptibilities, even their presence in Venice and Milan constituted an important acknowledgment of Italy's national existence, and her acquisition of the status of a European power.⁶⁴ And as though to make this more clear, the Austrian and German Legations at Rome were shortly afterwards raised to the rank of embassies. It is true that the gesture had more formal than political importance; but it undoubtedly marked an advance against the days of 1870, when Italy had still to feel that her place in the European framework was insecure. In the meantime also, though more by reason of a change of government than as a result of Visconti-Venosta's efforts, France had embarked on a new policy of improving Italo-French feeling, and in 1874 had at last recalled the *Orénoque* from the waters of Civita-vecchia—had at last, that is to say, put an end to the situation by which a French warship was permanently stationed off the Italian coast at the disposal of the Pope in case he should decide to leave Italy. This gesture, too, had been preceded by a distinctly pacifist speech made in the French Chamber by Décazes, who was now Minister of Foreign Affairs;⁶⁵ and the two events together seemed to have initiated almost a process of "mental disarmament" between the two countries. A French publicist wrote enthusiastically that "entre la France et l'Italie, entre la politique suivie par M. Visconti-Venosta . . . et la politique que M. le Duc Décazes a fait prévaloir dans les conseils du gouvernement français, il ne reste que les raisons de bonne intelligence, de cordialité. . . ." And this optimism seemed to be justified by the result of the French elections of January 1876, which produced a definitely Liberal majority and meant a severe shock to clerical influ-

ences. By coincidence it was the moment when Visconti-Venosta, with the whole party of the Right, was to fall from power, and it was precisely the moment when the good aspects of his policy were most clearly visible. From the point of view of the acquisition of allies, of the securing of diplomatic guarantees, of security assured by definite agreements, he left Italy no better off than he had found her; but his coolness had saved the country from many imbroglios, and its negatively good results were well summed up by a critical deputy who declared later that Visconti-Venosta's successor had found Italy enjoying "the friendship of Germany and Russia, the benevolent indifference of England, the acquiescence of Austria, and the promise of a *bonne entente* with France."⁶⁶

In this achievement, which might be called one of achieving international stability for Italy, he was much helped by the moderacy of the Right's ecclesiastical policy. Based fundamentally on Cavour's principle of a "free Church in a free State," it was generous in its treatment of the Church, and did not provide either the necessity or the excuse for intervention from abroad. Somewhat inconsistent and vague in legislation, its basic idea was nevertheless clear: to check ecclesiastical encroachment on secular activities, but prevent a revolutionary movement that might have involved a life-and-death contest between Church and State.⁶⁷ Its most characteristic expression was the Law of Guarantees, which secured the Pope the enjoyment of all his prerogatives and honours as a sovereign, awarded him the palaces of the Vatican and the Lateran (all exempt from any tax or duty), and assigned him an annual income of 3,225,000 lire. The same tact was shown in other laws passed in regard to Church property, the dissolution of certain religious orders, and the secularization of public charity.⁶⁸ And it was not easy to maintain such a spirit of conciliation in the face of the Vatican's intransigency, its repeated attacks on the Italian Government, and its unflagging agitation for the return of its temporal power—if need be, even with foreign help. There were many occasions when debates in the Chamber on relations between Church and State were intensely bitter, and roused vehement protests on the part of the Left, who as a party wanted an

energetic and forthright assertion of the rights of the modern secular state against all ecclesiastical encroachments and mediæval privileges. The accusation of "servility" and of conceding overmuch to the Vatican's pretensions was made against the Right in this regard almost as much as it had been in foreign policy;⁶⁹ and there were many who in their hearts favoured Luzzatti's amendment of the old formula, "a free Church in a *sovereign State*," or like Colonna di Cesaro thought sincerely that Italy would have no peace till Church and State proceeded like two parallel lines, extending indefinitely but never touching.⁷⁰

With few exceptions, however, the Right succeeded in imposing its conservatism on the Chamber. And when one of its own ministers seemed insufficiently temperate, it did not hesitate to bring about his fall. In this way Correnti, proposing a law for the suppression of the theological faculties in the universities, received the enthusiastic and triumphant votes of the Left, but shortly afterwards was ruined by those of the Right, who thought he had gone too far.⁷¹ And similarly in 1875, when the upper clergy's persistent disloyalty to the State provoked a sharp criticism of the Ministry's policy, it was the Right which in the end received a vote of confidence (219 votes to 149), and those who desired a revision of the Law of Guarantees for the safeguarding of the nation who remained discomfited.⁷² Indeed, from the point of view of expediency the Right's was probably the best policy that circumstances allowed; and its most unfortunate point was simply that, like Visconti-Venosta's diplomacy, it was felt to be spiritless and weak by those who had perforce to see it enacted. Repression, caution, passivity—they were qualities that recalled the old régimes and could only seem humiliating to a country that had already endured too long and too deep a series of humiliations. It was not quite exaggeration when della Gattina spoke of the "Roman question" as "burning coals placed in Italy's chest"; just as it was not mere vanity that caused Minghetti to protest bitterly against the kindly assumption of foreigners that Italy should be content with a position like that of Switzerland or Belgium. "A great country," he said, "cannot thus shut up her activities within

herself. The need of youth to expand will, unless more fields are open to it, turn to bitterness, corruption, and discontent. In the opinion of a respected member of the English parliament, the Egyptians must be left to stew in their own juice. I must confess that for my own country such a future does not attract me. The stew might get burnt. . . ."⁷³

Actually, indeed, it was in the field of internal government that the Right showed itself to be most inadequate in the formation of policy, as if with the entry into Rome the party had lost its compass and no longer knew how to organize the liberty it had won. Spaventa, in fact, put his finger on its weakness when he wrote that it was essentially a *political* party, whose administrative ideas were neither very coherent in themselves nor very well-proportioned to the social needs of the country:⁷⁴ and it was for this reason that, sensing its own want of government *savoir-faire*, it hesitated to advance, and from fear of doing too much, ended by doing too little. The most pressing questions which it was to encounter were those of education and public safety, and neither question was solved satisfactorily. They were allowed to descend to succeeding Italian governments as problems whose significance had been evaded, and whose urgency had been met by makeshift provisions of the most temporary and convenient kind. And this failure was the more notable because it was not due to lack of courage on the part of the deputies best informed, but to immobility and unwillingness on the part of the great majority of the Chamber.

Scialoja, presenting his Bill for compulsory elementary education (20th January, 1874), was met by definite opposition, though he left no doubt as to the measure's bearing on the moral development of the nation and was ably seconded by Correnti (Rapporteur), who showed the grave effects of parsimony regarding public instruction in a country where illiteracy still totalled nearly 72 per cent, and where the educated political class represented only a fraction of the nation.⁷⁵ Neither of them could shake the Chamber's aversion to new expense and its dread of the general economic loss which might result from the compulsory education of children old enough to work. The Bill was first mutilated and then

rejected by 140 votes to 107; and though Scialoja resigned, and his successors struggled on as best they could, nothing was effected till the Right had fallen from power. Then, and only then, in 1877 the necessary law was finally passed by a Left Government; and even then the provisions designed to enforce it were so inadequate that they could be, and were, evaded.

The question of public security was by its very nature more intractable, and could not be so simply set aside. It had already harassed a variety of ministers since 1859, and had received a variety of different treatments ranging from excessive severity to negligence, and tending to increase rather than cure the evil. As early as 1869 Lanza, in presenting a new law on the subject, had drawn attention to the alarming amount of crime and violence which existed in the kingdom, and since then the situation had not much improved. In the year 1871 charges of crime had been laid against 228,998 persons, of whom 85,000 had been found guilty; in 1872 no less than 452,104 persons had been charged, and 148,533 sentenced. Generally speaking, the State prisons contained an excessive number of delinquents, and the percentage of women and youths among them was such as, if allowed to continue, was likely to cause anxiety for the future of the State. This abnormal tendency was due to the strained social conditions of the last decades. It had been produced by the dislocation of trade following on the union of the provinces, partly by the social unrest which had inevitably accompanied the wars of independence, and partly by the number of bandits and free-lance plunderers who had used the period of struggle as an excuse for preying on the countryside. Such conditions were particularly difficult for the Government to deal with, because they required not so much laws of repression as time and a judicious expenditure of money, i.e. precisely those factors which the new kingdom could ill afford and for lack of which it had already felt itself crippled in its activities. Nevertheless, in 1874 it was clear that some definite step must be taken to curb the work of the Camorra and the Mafia in Sicily, and the Right proposed a Bill sanctioning extraordinary measures for the restoration of public security. Actually the measure was neither unreasonable

nor severe, but it aroused a storm of regional feeling and protest. The Left, predominantly Southern in composition and owing its election to the democratic feeling of the Southern provinces, openly accused the Right of wishing to maintain a vendetta against the electors who had rejected it; and though the charge was absurd, it indicated how deeply the South felt itself insulted by what it thought an attempt to set up a "moral division" in Italy—a division which seemed based on the North's pretensions to a higher and better ethic than the South. La Porta, a well-known Left Deputy, denied that Sicily required special provisions, and Crispi (later to become the most dynamic force in Italian politics) proudly affirmed that the Sicilian population had been goaded into increased crime by the repeated application of martial law over a space of fifteen years.⁷⁶ His defence was extremely partisan, but his implicit rebuke of the Right's policy was not without justification, and was given unexpected emphasis by the revelations of Taiani, who had been Procurator-General at Palermo and now came forward to denounce the evils of Sicilian administration with Ciceronian eloquence and fire. Acts of violence in the island, he declared, were often undertaken with the complicity of the police, and the activities of the Mafia received the protection of important public functionaries. . . . The responsibility for this state of affairs rested with all the ministries who had taken office since 1860, and preferred inertia to action.

These accusations stirred even the Camera; and it approved the law for exceptional measures, together with a proposal for the holding of a special inquiry into the internal conditions of Sicily. With this, however, the Sicilian question and the sufferings of the Sicilians were allowed to lapse into the obscurity from which fate had temporarily rescued them; and the Right left office—as so many Italian governments were to leave it—with the reproach of having done nothing to aid those who most urgently required it.

Connected with this question of public security was the question of the right of free assembly and of free speech. The Right had no wish to be intolerant, but as in regard to taxation, circumstances forced them further than they wished. The

demonstrations of the Papalists and the intransigent attitude assumed by the Republicans made it difficult to prevent disturbances without infringing liberties which could otherwise have been quietly guaranteed; and in 1872 Lanza felt it necessary to abandon the Liberal attitude adopted by Ricasoli and support the authoritarian formula "prevenire per non ripremere" ("anticipate or prevent—that you may not have to repress").⁷⁷ The formula was to become typical of a certain trend of thought among the conservatives of the Right, and served as a bone of contention in politics for the next forty years. Those who, with Lanza, thought it the duty of the Government to act as the interpreter of public liberty and forestall disorders by prohibiting anything which might, *a priori*, cause them, found themselves opposed by the followers of Zanardelli and Cairoli, who regarded liberty as more important than conformity and preferred to suppress disorders when they occurred rather than curb freedom of discussion from fear of its effects. Neither conception had a very happy history in the control of Italian political life. The first served later as an excuse for a rigid police régime, declared necessary to safeguard a public order which in point of fact was not really menaced. The second was made the excuse for a display of weakness so irrational as to lead finally to a series of attempted assassinations and bomb outrages. At this time, however, the formula was only twice invoked and on both occasions with success by the Right. First to explain the arbitrary prohibition of a Republican Assembly at Rome, and subsequently (far less justifiably) to excuse the arbitrary arrest of certain Radical leaders at the Villa Ruffi—men who had met in reality to discuss quietly their electoral programme, but were suspected of hatching a conspiracy against the State.⁷⁸ The latter episode, seeing that it caused an immediate reaction of public opinion in favour of the arrested, brought its own punishment on the originators and added a final flavour of bitterness to the unpopularity which had already begun to submerge the Right.

The actual moment of the Right's fall was determined by two extraneous factors: by the achievement of financial equilibrium (which seemed both to Parliament and country to mark

the end of the party's *raison d'être* as a Government), and by a fortuitous coalition between certain Tuscans of the Right and the Deputies of the Left under Depretis. The Right had indeed for some years been increasingly disliked and resented in the country—partly because of its relentlessness in imposing taxation, partly because of its refusal of democratic concessions, and partly because of its spirit of exclusion, its unwillingness to absorb the “new men” who had come to the fore since the achievement of unity.⁷⁹ These “disinherited” elements had replied by turning to the Left, who had thus gained in numbers (if not in coherency), while the Right had become ever more closed within the circle of its own ideas and more and more inaccessible to the new trends of public opinion. It had, too, irritated its opponents by its frank conviction of moral superiority, by its habit of treating its own fate as a party, as if it were the fate of the Kingdom of Italy, and by its obstinate clinging to power when it was clear that the country was weary both of its ideas and of its rule.

For fundamentally the country was tired of the Right; tired of its abstract idealism, of its exhausting discipline and of its continual demand for sacrifice without reward, of duty without glory. To the overstrained and disillusioned taxpayer it seemed as if the Left might be the initiator of a new epoch, an epoch in which reparation should be made for all that had been suffered and endured during the Risorgimento; and significantly enough it was the word “reparation” that was heard most frequently in connection with the party's programme.⁸⁰ Reparation was wanted for the heavy taxes, for the meagreness of public works in comparison with the other countries of Europe, for excessive administrative centralization, for absence of public security, for lack of Italian prestige abroad—in short, a general recompense for all the mistakes that had accumulated since the first period of united government in 1859. And the Left did not fail to exploit this vague discontent, attacking the most unpopular aspects of the Right's policy, making promises with all the insouciance of extremists unused to the necessity of fulfilling them, and advocating at one and the same time reduction of taxation and more lavish expenditure of public money;⁸¹ promises which, if impossible of fulfilment, were at

least effective in winning the electorate's support. For when on the 8th March, 1876, an adverse vote in the Chamber brought the Right's career to a close, the public, with few exceptions, was already convinced that the Left would inaugurate a rule of "prosperity," of "enlightened progress," and even of democratic reform.

THE LEFT IN POWER—GOVERNMENT
BY EVASION

THE illusion that Depretis's advent to power would inaugurate a new era in political life existed even in parliamentary circles. "In March of this year," wrote a deputy exultantly, "Italy has been witness not merely of a ministerial crisis, but of a true parliamentary revolution,"¹ and, dazzled by Depretis's pronouncements from Stradella, men refused to recognize the facts that in reality made the vaunted revolution simply a "change of Cabinet." Actually the superficial nature of the change was inherent in the Left's character as a party, and might have been foretold before Depretis began his experiments. For the party was a very heterogeneous entity, and, preoccupied with the struggle against the Right, had paid more attention to increasing the number of its recruits than to evaluating their quality or finding a harmony within their ideas.² Representatives of all shades and kinds of discontent (ranging from the injured interests of reactionary bourgeois to the grievances of oppressed peasants and the demands of unsatisfied townsmen) had been received with open arms and had been allowed, however unconsciously, to undermine the party's internal coherence and impose a strain on its solidarity unlikely to stand the test of power. Indeed, the Left had no sooner passed from Opposition to Government than its capacity for agreement and cohesion vanished like "mists before the wind," and the variety of its tendencies demanded immediate and diverse expression. The contradictions among leaders, the personal antagonism among their followers (hitherto held in check by the discipline of the struggle for office) began to show themselves in all their weakening reality and, mutually conflicting, revealed the phenomenon of a majority too large for stability. It was a weakness indicated by the very fact that the party entered office without a plan of government and with no programme beyond the vague and generalized promises made to the public.³ "Compact and

vigorous in the negative work of opposition, the Left," critics noted, "was ill at ease when confronted with the necessity of construction, and was moreover confused both by the many promises it had made, and the need of preserving the popularity it had acquired through systematic criticism of all preceding ministries."⁴ And these were the factors that, united with its internal dissensions and lack of integral conviction, drove it on towards the use of compromise and evasion in solving the problems of the day. Almost inevitably it aimed rather at conciliating and superficially contenting its majority than at satisfying the real needs of the country; and it brought to the direction of public affairs neither the originality nor the innovating courage that had been hoped. Its acquisition of power signified far more the personal predominance of a new group of men than the predominance of a new system of ideas: and after three years of its rule Spaventa⁵ justly remarked that "the government of the Left is the same as that of the Right, only not so good." "Right" proposals and schemes and even points of policy seemed by some feat of topography to have changed their places in the Camera, and though such a continuance of its work was not without advantage to the State, it produced considerable disillusionment and bitterness among those to whom the Left had promised "reparation." More significant than the somewhat abstract self-reproaches of eminent Left leaders were such popular sayings as "the Left has riveted the chains the Right has forged" and the popular doggerel:

"E cambiato sì, il maestro di cappella,
Ma la musica e sempre quella . . ."

Perhaps only a detailed analysis of the party's composition could show how wide a range of beliefs its generic name covered and how little real community of opinion there was among its members.⁶ For it included not only the holders of Republican, Radical, and doctrinaire Liberal views, but men who accepted perhaps half of their ideas from each of these schools, and, differing in aspiration, ideology, and allegiance, had in common only a vague ambition for what they called (with a capital letter) "Progress." What this "progress" con-

sisted of, how it was to be achieved, or having been achieved, consolidated, they would almost certainly have been at a loss to explain; and they avoided the discomfort of posing such a problem by holding more or less fast to their particular ideas and declaring that their realization represented all that was needed for the victory of the party's cause. That such an attitude was likely to end primarily in a deadlock was shown by, for instance, the development of such economic questions as the control of the railways, where there was sharp disagreement between those who favoured private administration and those who wanted administration by the State. And equal disagreement existed in regard to fiscal reform, the equalization of the land-tax, the incidence of taxation in general, and—a particularly sensitive point—what proportion of it should be borne by North and South respectively. In internal policy, moreover, there existed a type of divergence best illustrated by the fact that, although Nicotera was a rigid authoritarian, Zanardelli was an unswerving defender of public and private liberty; while as regards the franchise, Cairoli and Crispi wanted universal suffrage, but Depretis was in favour only of its moderate extension, and Nicotera would probably have limited it still more.⁷

And there were other innate difficulties limiting the party's capacity; first, perhaps, the fact that so many of its members were men "new to office." When the general elections finally confirmed Depretis's ministry, 170 of the deputies returned had not taken part in any of the preceding thirteen Legislatures and had had no experience of administration.⁸ Most of them lawyers, preoccupied with formal and theoretical conceptions, they were hardly likely to understand the nature of the abyss existing between the "real country" and the "legal country" or resolve the conflict of interests it represented. Only a minority tried to grasp the conception of the nation in non-abstract and *human* terms, or translate its meaning into ordinary legislative activity; the rest—and it was the party's second chief weakness—remained busy over their own private ends, helping to develop a system of government by factions and small sectional ambitions, but forgetting the popular cause that as deputies they were supposed to represent.⁹ For the Left

included among its ranks a large number of demagogues and adventurers—*arrivistes* within the sphere of politics—men whose standards of public morality were below those of the Right¹⁰ and whose influence in Parliament was largely a matter of personal interests and intrigue. Some had been trained in the old Bourbon traditions of the South, and brought with them into public life the evils which had become traditional there in the period of Bourbon rule, spreading its corruption through the different fields of administration, local as well as national, and formulating the conception of government office as a convenient field for private exploitation.

This did not mean that the party lacked its quota of gifted personalities or of generous, disinterested minds. It included such Southerners as Fortunato and Colajanni, who devoted their lives to defending the cause of the South. It included Zanardelli, a man of outstanding integrity and fearless courage—perhaps the only Left Deputy to enter Parliament prepared for his work by years of political study, ready to sacrifice both himself and his career when his convictions were at stake. Young as he was at this time, and invited by Depretis to enter his first ministry under the mistaken impression that he represented simply an ambitious and youthful lawyer come up from the provinces, it was not long before he showed himself to “possess both a character and a mind,” disdaining to keep his portfolio in a Cabinet whose policy he could not trust.¹¹ There was, too, Cairoli, the last of the heroic Cairoli family, upright, loyal, idealistic to the point of blindness, destined through his *naïveté* to inflict a fatal injury on the country, and yet with all his ineptitude still on a higher moral level than those who were to exploit him.¹² And in contrast to Cairoli there was Magliani, brilliant, talented, unstable—the Mephistopheles of Italian finance—whose eloquence was to fascinate the Chamber to acquiescence, even while his policy led the country to ruin. There were too such lesser figures as Taiani, the defender of Sicily, and Coppino, the Minister for Education, a cultured man of letters sincerely interested in his work, and Stanislaus Mancini, the versatile and travelled politician whose home resembled a salon of the eighteenth century, and whose over-flexible and subtle mind caused

Depretis to speak of him almost ruefully as "the acrobat of politics."¹³ Last, standing almost in isolation, there was the figure of Crispi, with his unquenchable ardour, his patriotic devotion, and his ruinous vanity: and with Crispi might perhaps have been linked Nicotera, at this time the chief figure in the Left second to Depretis, a man of much energy, but aggressive, violent and impulsive, undisciplined by culture or scruple, held in respect chiefly on account of his gallantry in the Wars of Independence.

With such a group of men the Left did not lack the raw material for good government; but it required a leader capable of harmonizing these men's mutual antipathies, a leader who could not only diagnose the country's ills, but co-ordinate, direct, and inspire his contemporaries in the work of curing them. Depretis was not such a man. "The incorruptible corruptor," the "political Loyola" who knew more of human psychology than of State problems, was more capable of exploiting his knowledge of men than solving the difficulties of the nation. "In the Constitution he sees nothing but the Chamber of Deputies: in the Chamber he sees nothing but the Left: and in the Left he sees only himself," said Sella shrewdly. And the comment suggested the mental limitation that made Depretis, despite his talents, only a clever, everyday politician. Subtle and evasive, he was too disillusioned to believe in reform, too sceptical to try innovation. Endowed so highly with common sense that it blunted his imagination, he remained well-meaning but uncreative in his ideas, indifferent as to the value of the ends at which he was aiming and unscrupulous as to the methods by which they were achieved. Under his influence the system of opportunist and personal rule reached its apex with the initiation of *trasformismo*, a system of winning over to the Government promising men of the Opposition, theoretically on the principle of securing the ablest men of all parties to serve the State, actually on the principle of allowing the Government to cling to office by buying supporters with the "cohesive power of public plunder."¹⁴ Depretis, indeed, cared less for a deputy's convictions than the amount of influence he could exercise in the Chamber, and the terms Right and Left had no clear meaning

for him. "Depretis," wrote Bonfadini bitterly, "has succeeded in converting the Italian parliament into a large provincial council," and with the atmosphere of personal intrigues and the restriction of all intellectual interests the comparison was not an inappropriate one. Nothing in this regard could have been more typical than his remarks concerning foreign policy: "When I see an international question on the horizon, I open my umbrella and wait till it has passed."¹⁵ The umbrella was a capacious one, and Depretis took shelter behind it from far more than international questions.

He began characteristically by appropriating much of the Right's policy and setting up Special Commissions, who were "to study and report" on the more inconvenient and troublesome questions of the day, especially those that concerned finance. Something had clearly to be done to satisfy those taxpayers whose rebellion had put the Left in power: and Depretis hoped to quieten them by a judicious retouching of the fiscal structure—a scheme of tempering the exactions in such a fashion as to give the taxpayer the sensation of relief, while the Budget remained substantially unaffected.¹⁶ With an unblushing abandonment of his criticism of the Right's policy, he declared that he "would not yield a jot of the revenue,"¹⁷ or, as he put it in his programme: there was to be no permanent diminution in the State's income, but a transformation of the taxation system to be carried out without disturbing the balance of national finance. The practical means of realizing such a Utopia were not indicated. Perhaps even Depretis himself had doubts as to its realizability, doubts which must have been considerably strengthened by the fate of his first four financial Bills. The first, aiming at a tax on manufactured goods, was reactionary in tone and unlikely to have more than a slight influence on the situation. The second, a law for the long-promised equalization of the land-tax, left the tax in the same disorder as it had found it, taking its place among the numerous inefficacious reforms that had already been tried in the field and were, ineptly, to be tried again. The third represented an attempt at dealing with the burning grievance of the grist-tax¹⁸—the grievance which had done most to put the Left in power, and was now dogging its heels

like a Nemesis risen from its Opposition past. Depretis's promises had in fact been too lavish and public to be merely shelved. It had been Depretis who had denounced the tax as unconstitutional and contrary to the fundamental laws of the State: Depretis who had sworn to abolish it even when the finances of the country were in an almost desperate condition: Depretis who, as the last resort, had even denied that it was of real financial efficacy. Yet he now found himself in a position where, despite the balance left by Minghetti, it was not really possible to contemplate reductions in taxation. A careful examination of all methods of lightening the grist-tax showed that in substance it must be maintained, and that the biggest concession possible would be some alleviation of the harsh methods by which it was exacted. For a reformist ministry the concession was negligible: but when it had been duly advertised, eulogized, and heralded as a major reform it served to save Depretis's face with the electors and create a hopeful atmosphere in which the taxes, though they remained unchanged in severity, were paid with less active discontent. People thought that to obtain more they had only to wait, and probably even the Ministerialists themselves did not realize the anomaly of the situation—realize, that is to say, that the taxation laws could not be left as they were, the same amount exacted from their application as before, and at the same time the Italian taxpayer relieved of his most crushing burdens.

The only really serious and permanent improvement in the field of finance was contained in Depretis's fourth Bill, where a sliding scale was established for the income-tax on incomes between lit. 400 and lit. 800, the fixed tax being applied only after lit. 800, and not as before to smaller amounts.¹⁹ This was at least an innovation, and represented a definite gain to a large class of persons with small means: but Depretis kept its principle within narrow limits, and—perhaps from a wish to reassure the commercial element who were nervous as to what financial schemes might be hatched by a democratic government—introduced, apart from this, only one other important novelty—a tax on the production of sugar.

The manner of its introduction was typical of Depretis's methods. Having alluded in his speech at Stradella to the

disparity in the taxes paid on sugar and salt (the tax on salt was more than double that on sugar), he had finished by eloquently denouncing the inequality that made sugar the "salt of the rich" and "the luxury of the poor," promising at the same time to reduce the inequality between them.²⁰ From this speech ingenuous electors had inferred a reduction in the tax on salt: instead, Depretis was no sooner in power than he increased the tax on sugar, a procedure which certainly lessened the disparity between the two, though not quite in the fashion hoped by the lower classes. And this incident was important, not only as showing the readiness of the Left to evade the spirit of its obligations, but also its willingness to adopt any means of getting its measures passed. For the Bill had no sooner been presented to Parliament and met with opposition than Nicotera indulged in private negotiations—negotiations which resulted happily in the passing of the Bill, and, a few days later, the bestowal of the title of "commendatori" upon sixty of its supporters.²¹

Such juggling with difficulties was to appear again in other aspects of the Left's policy, more especially its internal policy. While in Opposition, the party had been *par excellence* the champion of freedom of association and of public meeting, yet almost immediately on assuming office there was a reversal of attitude on the part of a large number of its members, and Nicotera as Minister of the Interior showed himself more despotic than any of his predecessors.²² Newspapers were suppressed or banned, radical meetings were prohibited, Labour unions dissolved, and promoters of strikes sent to the penal settlements on the islands. In short, there was a general and open curtailment of the rights of free speech, free assembly, and free Press, with a series of reactionary measures which the Right itself had not employed.

Shortly afterwards, moreover, the Ministry of the Interior became the subject of two public scandals which still further shook the prestige of parliamentary institutions and the good name of the Left. The first arose from Nicotera's declaring that on taking over the Ministry of the Interior he had found certain documents in the archives containing reports of the private life of several Left Deputies; documents which, he

insinuated, the preceding Ministry of the Right had intended to use in order to defame their political adversaries.²³ The charge was ill-supported and was vehemently denied by the Right, but the impression left on the country was an unpleasant one: and it was unfortunately deepened by the scandals which now began to circulate over Nicotera's efforts to "manage" the general elections.

These elections had been decided on, not so much because Depretis feared real opposition in the Chamber (where he had already a fairly strong majority), but because it was generally felt in political circles that the change over from Right to Left required popular confirmation. To Nicotera it represented a chance both of gratifying his dislike of the Right and securing the predominance of his own party. No Government Minister had ever worked the electoral machine so unscrupulously or made such extensive use of intimidation and corruption. Public service officials found themselves recklessly transferred from one end of Italy to the other, communal councils were dissolved, and prefects browbeaten, threatened or bribed into becoming the Government's electoral agents. Apart from this, pressure was brought to bear through the organs of local administration, who were given to understand that "favourable" districts might expect new schools, public works, roads, canals, post and telegraph offices, etc.; while the "unfavourable" might find even their existing institutions suppressed.²⁴ And the effect of these tactics was great. Many of the most eminent men on the Right lost their seats, while the number of the party's representatives was reduced to 90, and the Left emerged with a total of 408 victorious candidates.²⁵ Depretis could not have wished for a more secure position nor one better calculated to enable him to carry out his programme of reforms. Instead, however, he continued to equivocate, to rely on the protection afforded by a subsidized Press, and to keep his supporters "in fee" by the system of corruption which was now eating its way through all branches of Government administration.

The evils of a subsidized Press and a corrupt administration were not new. There had always, for instance, been newspapers paid to create a public opinion favourable to the

Government's policy; but the point was that they had been paid more discreetly and had done work more limited in scope. Talk such as now arose, of money taken from the secret funds of the Ministry of the Interior, and of newspapers bought as organs for the opinions of individual ministers, represented a further evil in political life; and the climax seemed reached when Nicotera was accused of violating the secrecy of the telegraph service in order to give special information to the Press he controlled.²⁶ Questioned in Parliament and obviously unable to refute the charges made against him, his failure shook the Cabinet and forced Depretis to resign in order to escape defeat.

The work achieved by Depretis in this first ministry had been mixed, both in quality and quantity. Ineffective as regards big-scale reform, he had still accomplished a fair amount in regard to smaller questions and had prepared the way for development. In regard to Sicily he had failed, like all his predecessors, to do more than discuss remedies which he did not mean to apply, but he had at least in doing so, given publicity to Bonfadini and the Commission of Inquiry's excellent report on conditions in the island. He had moreover, in March 1877, supported Bertani's proposal to hold an agrarian inquiry, and placed the main responsibility for it on Jacini—Jacini, whose investigations and analysis were to form a uniquely valuable record of the evils ruining Italian agriculture and the Italian peasant class.²⁷ Depretis, moreover, had faced the thorny question of compulsory education and the controversy over the place of religious teaching in the schools. The latter, after a desperate battle between Left and Right, had been settled by making religious instruction optional and providing that it should be given at the request of the parents:²⁸ the former by making education obligatory from six to nine years, and declaring that the law enforcing it should be gradually applied, beginning with those communes that enjoyed the most prosperous conditions and progressing gradually towards those who were economically worse off. Theoretically this should have been satisfactory: practically it was insufficient. It ignored the predominating problem of how the new educational scheme was to be financed, and how small

communes already burdened with debt were to find the money to pay the new schoolmasters and erect the new schoolhouses necessary to make the law a reality.²⁹ And in point of fact the number of schools remained hopelessly inadequate, and the teaching staff of such poor quality that the "instruction" they imparted was as likely to harm as benefit the recipients. Moreover, the penal clauses against those refusing to send their children to school remained a dead letter, and the figures for increased attendance, though they showed some progress, fell far short of what was really required.³⁰

Something of the same carelessness concerning the financial background of sweeping legislative schemes had been evident in the negotiations for the Railway Conventions, negotiations during the course of which Zanardelli had resigned, suspicious as to the motives and secret influences which he knew to be at work. His resignation had left the negotiations unsettled, and they were to prove one of the most complex problems confronting Depretis's new and second ministry. For it was still Depretis to whom the King entrusted the duty of forming the new Cabinet. He reconstituted it from the débris of the old, dropping those ministers who seemed compromised by the recent disputes and giving the folio of the Interior to Crispi, of finance to Magliani, and taking foreign affairs himself. The change did little to check the tide of discontent and anger that was rising. De Sanctis had already begun a crusade for more purity in public life, and this campaign for a "moral regeneration," as he called it, was being accompanied by alternate exposures and denunciations of the evils that were killing the repute of parliamentary institutions.³¹

Foremost among these was the growth of corruption and abuse in provincial administration—evils which had been much fostered by the arbitrary power of the Central Government, whose extensive functions made it the real arbiter of local destinies and whose activities tended to be determined by a wish to conciliate important supporters. These supporters in turn, since even their commercial enterprises depended on the Ministry's favour, tried inevitably to purchase its goodwill, with the result that the pattern of local life was more often formed by the bond of reciprocal self-interest between central

and provincial organs than by the realities and exigencies of the district. This interplay of influences had begun chiefly in the South, where the system of cliques based on the relation of patron and client had taken firm root. It dated from the old days of Bourbon rule, when citizens had found it more convenient to group themselves together and seek a powerful patron for their interests than struggle individually without the influence or means to make their demands heard.³² Justifiable enough in the beginning, however, it had become increasingly evil since the "clients" had formed the habit of recklessly seeking the satisfaction of their demands at the public expense and expecting their "patron" to do the same, or at least act as the agent of their particular concerns. When the patron was a parliamentary Deputy, and the clients the chief electors of his constituency, the effect of their relationship on the welfare of both the province and the nation was enough to make even hardened politicians like Bonghi, Zanardelli, Minghetti, and de Sanctis feel that government in Italy was becoming "speculation" and the country itself drifting into an unhealthy and pathological state.³³ "They made Italy, only to devour her" was popularly said of the politicians, and Zanardelli wrote bitterly that "the Deputies [also]. . . are inescapably bound . . . to the tyranny of a few individuals, have to render themselves the procurators of their electors rather than the representatives of the nation, and are sometimes constrained to spend more time frequenting the anti-Chamber of Ministers than the Chamber of Deputies."³⁴ The situation in fact presented a hierarchy in which each grade had its own cycle of illegitimate influences and forces of coercion. The Deputy, in order to be re-elected, had to satisfy the ambitions of his local supporters and bring pressure to bear on the Ministry; the Ministry had to satisfy the Deputy in order to keep a majority in the Chamber, and could do so only by putting pressure on the local administration and the prefect; the prefect, in order to keep his position, had to put pressure on the provincial and commercial councils; and so *ad infinitum*. A small example of the results of such intrigue was seen during the period of State control of the railways, when the administration had real difficulty in

securing the running of express trains, because each Deputy demanded that there should be a compulsory halt at a station within his constituency.³⁵ Looking at the railway time-table one could, it was said, deduce which Deputy was responsible for the different stopping places, and even why the railway line (if it were new) had been constructed along precisely that route.

Apart from the use of the Central Government's patronage, there was, too, a tendency to favouritism and jobbery within the framework of the local units themselves. Bias in administration was reflected in bias regarding the allocation of contracts and the granting of concessions and facilities in public life. The most powerful families or groups in the commune frequently dominated the municipal council and tended to regulate affairs strictly from their own point of view; even, for example, to the extent of allowing goods belonging to their own faction to pass free through the local customs, while putting a heavy duty on those of their opponents and sometimes organizing the taxation system against them.³⁶ And aside from such direct abuse of the instruments of power, there was the more subtle abuse of it to condone the misappropriation of the property of the communes, of the local charity organizations and similar financial trusts. In certain places the property of the commune was leased to figure-heads or to the friends of communal councillors at ridiculous rents; in others it was sold outright to men of straw, and serious bidders kept away.³⁷

Resistance of such oppression was liable to be ineffective, because circumstances made it difficult for the injured to obtain redress. It was useless for villages goaded by injustice to rise in insurrection against the landowning class, or for groups of peasants to commit blind acts of sabotage:³⁸ such movements were put down by the *Carabinieri*, and were heard of only through the carefully worded reports of those who had been instrumental in provoking them. The commercial councils, even if their protection were involved, were unlikely to do much, since they were often "packed" bodies whose elements were liable to be elected from lists prepared or revised by the cliques, and who were aware that unwise reforming energy

meant in all probability dissolution on the recommendation of a superior official, and even substitution by a commissioner from the Central Government.³⁹ A real impulse to reform, if it were to carry weight, had to come from the prefect; and the prefect, even if desirous of doing his duty, had first to discover the truth and then face the probable resistance of the council, and perhaps even the deputy. Transfers of prefects from one province to another, the withholding of promotion and lowering of rank were all weapons which might be turned against him and which would rob his protest of any efficacy.

This in fact raised another crucial aspect of the problem: the relation of the Government to its employees.⁴⁰ It was not only the prefect who trembled before the spectre of transference and degradation, but a host of lesser public functionaries whose views of their duties were liable to be determined by the wishes of their superiors, more especially after 1876, when there was some suspicion of Government interference even within the field of justice. The prosecution of crimes in the South, for instance, was not always equally quick and severe; the appointment and general treatment of magistrates not above suspicion; and judicial inquiries not always pushed home to their logical conclusion.⁴¹ Such facts were not likely to encourage a high standard of honour among officials or stimulate them to a disinterested view of their work: and indeed accusations of slackness and abuse were common against all types of functionaries, even against the *sindacos* (mayors) of the village, who controlled the local police force and issued certificates of good character, etc.⁴²

None of these abuses, however, roused anything like a real and concerted attack on the system which engendered them. Isolated intellectuals and patriots like de Sanctis and Fortunato (and Mosca and Arcóleo) might call down fire from heaven on those who were corrupting the nation, and the inarticulate agricultural masses might rebel instinctively against their fate; but the majority of the nation, and especially the middle class, regarded the abuses they saw about them with a certain sceptical or indifferent detachment. For them these were neither "good" nor "bad" years in the life of the State, but simply "sordid years"—to be met by an attitude of polite

aloofness, of a curiosity withdrawn from the dust—and blood—of the arena. Appealed to so vehemently by the reformers, they awaited chiefly, and with major interest, a relief of their fiscal burdens, and saw the alarms and excursions of daily politics as part of a spectacle whose sequence it would be indiscreet to disturb. As for the victims, “the Italians are a people easily moved to . . . resignation,” said della Gattina, who knew better than most men the mingled docility and stoicism that underlay the masses’ endurance. And this spirit of endurance, combined with the limited horizon of his educated contemporaries, and the narrow frontiers of their indignation, were enough to make impossible a movement of active reform. Only isolated sections of the country, whose imagination, wants or prejudices were directly touched, felt themselves called upon to make a real protest, and more agitation could be excited by such an abstract constitutional issue as the abolition of a ministerial department than by a humanitarian issue such as the oppression of the peasants in the remoter provinces. These were later to find their spokesmen in Colajanni and in the generous pamphleteers of the 1898 risings; but for the time being the kind of defeatism inherent in a philosophy of intense disillusionment had frozen the springs of disinterested public activity.

Depretis, in fact, was arousing more opposition by his reshuffling of public departments than by his philosophy of tolerating abuse. Anxious only to temporize, to avoid questions of great stress, he might perhaps have evaded even this unpopularity if it had not been for the influence of Crispi, whom he had brought into the Cabinet to replace Nicotera. Crispi had set his heart both on the application of a “strong” policy to internal affairs and on an alteration in the distribution of portfolios; and it was Depretis’s fate in his second ministry to be dragged further than he wished to go by Crispi, as he had been dragged in his first ministry by Nicotera. Under the influence of Nicotera’s aggressive audacity he had then found it necessary to alter his own official status and make the “Prime Minister” essentially pre-eminent in this Cabinet, thereby breaking with the Italian practice of twenty years;⁴³ under Crispi’s influence he now yielded to those who wished

for the suppression of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, dividing its functions between the departments of Treasury and Finance.⁴⁴ The proposal for its abolition was not a new one; it had already been made (in the interests of economy) by the Commission on the Budget no less than three times; but it was a proposal which a well-informed and realistic statesman would have refused. Italy depended for at least two-thirds of her wealth on agricultural production: she was essentially an agricultural country: and the new Agrarian Commission of Inquiry (as well as that which had lately terminated its preliminary report) was showing how desperately the condition of agriculture in the peninsula required organization, improvement, and finance.⁴⁵ The most obvious and justifiable course therefore would have been to increase the efficiency of a department so overburdened with technical difficulties, at the same time either enlarging its budget or making it some special grant-in-aid. To refuse financial help, and, not content with this, to abolish even the machinery for dealing with agrarian problems, was a blunder so terrible as to be almost ludicrous; but it was precisely the type of blunder which a Government composed mainly of lawyers, professors, and intellectuals might have been expected to make. In short, the practice so unfortunately initiated by Cavour of distributing portfolios to ministers without any regard for their technical knowledge had begun to produce wider effects than he had ever intended, and where previously lack of a body of trained experts had been a matter for comment and regret, the time was coming when cavalry generals and lawyers were to hold the Ministry of Marine, criminologists the portfolio of public works, and admirals those of foreign affairs, without any real protest being aroused or its result for the country's welfare thoughtfully assessed.

The point of immediate importance now raised in regard to Depretis concerned the constitutional aspect of his action: the point as to whether the Constitution did in fact allow the Prime Minister to alter the existence and functions of the various departments by decree, or whether the establishment and suppression of ministries did not pertain essentially to the prerogatives of Parliament. Within a short time the dispute

between the defenders of the executive and the defenders of the legislative power reached considerable heat, and the discussion successfully invaded the peaceful hall of the Senate. Momentarily it seemed that Depretis was at last to meet with an issue in which principles outweighed personal ambitions, and the public interest was at last beginning to be engaged, when the dispute was brought to an abrupt end by an event that temporarily united all parties and all interests in a movement of genuine sympathy—the death of the King.

The death of Vittorio-Emanuele represented far more than the loss of a popular monarch. It represented also, and far more subtly than the mere statement implies, the destruction of one of the nation's creators.⁴⁶ For with Vittorio-Emanuele Italy lost, just when she most required it, a leader with faith in her quality, a man who had a high ideal of his country and standards as high as his ideal. "Italy must not only be respected, she must be feared," he had said; and in the age of Depretis the words seemed like the reaffirmation of a forgotten principle, an echo from a time when political leaders had indeed served a national cause, and Vittorio-Emanuele himself had set the tone of public integrity on the field of Novara, when, rejecting Austrian bribes and threats, he had said that the House of Savoy knew the way to exile but not to dishonour. To lose him now was like visibly losing the spirit he had embodied; as if an epitaph were being written on the values and ethics of the Risorgimento, and the country finally delivered over to the small ideas and day-to-day philosophy of the Depretis type.

In another sense, too, his going seemed to arrest the current of normal political life and leave its continuance doubtful. The monarchy was not so firmly established as to make the succession entirely an unquestioned affair, and yet the work of securing the new King's position had hardly been begun before the death of the Pope (Pius IX) gave public confidence a still deeper and more radical shock. Taken in conjunction the two events presented the subversive elements in the State (whether Republican or Papalists) with a unique opportunity of creating difficulties; and the fact that no disturbance occurred, that Umberto took his father's place without delay

or hindrance, and that the Cardinals proceeded peacefully to the election of a new Pope in Rome was due chiefly to the energy and will displayed by the Minister of the Interior.⁴⁷ It was indeed a situation perfectly adapted to bring out the best of Crispi's talents. He saw to it that the routine of transition was carried out swiftly and well, while by a display of strength (for which he had always a weakness) he induced the Cardinals to think better of their original intention of abandoning Rome and holding the Conclave abroad. If they left the Vatican, it was intimated, the Government would occupy it; while if they remained and the Pope were elected in the normal manner, they would be assured the most perfect liberty of election.⁴⁸ And given these two alternatives, there could be no doubt as to where the interests of the Church lay. Leo XIII (Cardinal Pecci) was elected amid precautions against outside pressure so elaborate that no Catholic could have doubted the strict impartiality of the choice, and to the general public the State even appeared humiliated before the Church. The humiliation was not popular, nor even perhaps necessary; but it was in any case temporary, and the gains it procured were both solid and lasting. To have surmounted a crisis in the relations of Church and State and of State and Monarchy represented the attainment of already another stage in the kingdom's consolidation.

Depretis's Cabinet, however, did not live long to enjoy its achievements. Despite the promising initiation of the new reign the Ministry was again involved in a public scandal, and by a strange coincidence one in which the Ministry of the Interior was again the chief scapegoat. Unable to see Crispi's success in the department from which he himself had had to resign, Nicotera stirred up de Zerbi (editor of the Neapolitan newspaper, *Piccolo*) to accuse Crispi of bigamy, and the charge, supported by some circumstantial evidence and a great deal of moral indignation, created an outcry too bitter for Crispi to retain his portfolio.⁴⁹ Resigning to appease public feeling (and thereby being forced from his work just as it was becoming of real importance), his fall was followed by that of Depretis and the whole Cabinet; and the King, as yet hardly established on his throne, was faced with the difficulty

of finding a successor. His final choice was in accordance with the Liberal tradition of his House. For, convinced that even the more Radical section of the Left should be given power if they commanded sufficient support, he ignored Conservative doubts and summoned Cairoli.

It was a choice that roused more tolerance in the Chamber than enthusiasm. Men doubted Cairoli's fitness for his work, even while they respected his patriotism and the nobility of the tradition he represented.⁵⁰ As rigid in character as he was limited in intellect, as idealistic in inspiration as he was mediocre in ability, curiously lacking in perception of realities, he seemed rich only in those moral qualities likely to handicap a statesman in the world of nineteenth-century diplomacy—generosity, kindness, great capacity for good faith and trust in persons and principles. Estimates of him in the Camera differed according to the point of view of the observer. To some he was merely a "wooden-head": to others, like della Gattina, he was—and the title found most currency—"the pompous incompetent." Few had real confidence in his policy, and even those most anxious to see an end of the vacillations, the compromises and subterfuges of Depretis felt anxiety as to the wisdom of exchanging him for a man quite so lacking in sense of practical affairs as Cairoli. Italy, it was clear, would gain by the high standards he would bring to the administration of home affairs; but it seemed unlikely that the integrity would be accompanied by efficiency, or that in diplomacy and international questions his blind and defiant idealism would be sustained by any international technique.

His first Cabinet was to be remarkable chiefly for two things. First, for the formulation of a new principle in foreign policy and its disastrous application; second, a new controversy over the maintenance of public order culminating in an attempted assassination of the King. In the field of foreign affairs the Cabinet inherited a bad tradition and a negligent policy from Depretis, who had been faithful to his "umbrella" maxim and evaded most of the issues which national interest would have required him to face.⁵¹ Even discussion among the Great Powers as to the solution of the Eastern question had not moved him from his inertia, and in April 1877 della

Gattina had openly reproved the whole Depretis Ministry with having "isolated" Italy, alienated her friends, and left her "suspected" by all.⁵² The reproof was exaggerated, but it remained true that the European situation had changed in Italy's disfavour, and that Melegari (the Foreign Minister) had had apparently no plan for its readjustment.⁵³ Relations with France, once de Broglio had replaced Simon, had again become tense, and the danger of the French Clericals coming into power had stimulated nervousness in the Italian Camera. In addition, there had been (and still was) the question of Austrian expansion in the Balkans—the menace of an Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, countenanced by Russia and already accepted by the treaty of Reichstadt.

So far as France was concerned, little could have been done except secure Italy's position abroad and wait for the outcome of the French elections: but in the case of Austria at least some agreement might have been negotiated by which the Italian frontier was rectified on the Alps in return for Austria's aggrandisement on the Adriatic. For it was a frontier notably unjust—even in comparison with the normal standards of frontier injustice in Europe. Drawn up at the close of the national Wars of Independence, it had left several definitely Italian provinces under Austrian rule while strategically, it had (in the classic phrase) "placed Austria astride of the Alps," able to descend upon Italy whenever she chose. A skilful diplomatist might now have made its rectification seem the inevitable counterpart of Austria's Eastern policy; but Depretis had as signally failed to deal with it as he had failed to harmonize the situation with France.

He had (vaguely) encouraged official Italian newspapers to protest against the injustice of a boundary that left such Italian regions as Trieste and the Trentino in Austrian hands; but when the Austrian Press retaliated by bitterly accusing the Italian Government of favouring Irredentism, he had not known what stand to take, or indeed if it were worth taking any stand at all. In the end, and after consultation with the King, he had decided to send Crispi abroad to see if a solution could not perhaps be found by an alliance with Germany—an alliance that would guarantee Italy against France and possibly

impose some limit on Austrian ambitions. But his ignorance of the forces with which he had to deal was shown by the mere fact that he had selected Crispi for the mission. For with all his merits—and they were many—Crispi was not a diplomat. Ardent, sincere, vulnerable alike in temperament and self-esteem, he could neither calculate his policy nor defend himself from the strategy of his opponents: and his attempts at doing so were likely only to furnish Bismarck and Salisbury with amusement.⁵⁴

The mission indeed resulted in little that was tangible, and gave no promise of anything tangible to follow. From his visit to France (where he went first) Crispi brought back chiefly an impression of internal crisis and a (quite irrational) conviction that French restlessness might seek distraction in a war against Italy, for which reason he urged Depretis to proceed as rapidly as possible with national armament.⁵⁵ In Germany repeated conversations with Bismarck showed that statesman to be completely impervious to any considerations but those of national self-interest—a psychology that no one could have been less fitted to exploit than Crispi. By exerting himself to the full he succeeded heroically in wringing from Bismarck only that which, had he been more astute, he might have induced the Chancellor to ask of him; namely, the offer of an offensive and defensive alliance against France.⁵⁶ Seeing that it was difficult to imagine any circumstances under which Italy would attack France, the offensive clause could only be reckoned a net gain to Bismarck: and his advantage was strengthened by the evasion of any pledge to guarantee Italy against Austria. Austria in fact was to be left outside the alliance with complete liberty of aggression, the promise of German neutrality, and a free hand in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which region an extension of Austrian influence seemed to Bismarck to represent “good policy.” The only compensation which Italy might expect for thus having her enemy established on the Adriatic was the annexation of Albania. To Crispi’s protest that Italy wanted, not a “Turkish Province,” but a return of her own people from Italia Irredenta, the only reply was silence or a rebuff.⁵⁷

The same attitude appeared to have been decided on in

England. Like Bismarck, Derby was willing to concede Albania, but Albania only.⁵⁸ Absorbed in the general solution of the Eastern question, the abstract issue of justice to Italy was not one which interested him greatly; and as Crispi was to discover, even this compensation was not envisaged by Austria. Arriving in Vienna, he remained amazed by the depth of ill-will there and by the hostility which forced him into a defensive rôle, tactfully anxious to avoid (instead of initiating) talk of frontier rectification, seeking to conciliate Andrassy by the abandonment of some of Italy's most cherished and well-founded claims, and finally even listening to a disquisition from him on the constitution and character of racial minorities.⁵⁹

Actually, therefore, the main achievement of the diplomatic mission so hopefully decided on by Depretis was an expensive improvement in relation with Austria. Bismarck's proposals for an alliance against France were too disadvantageous to be taken up seriously once the French elections had shown a clear Republican victory, and so removed the danger of clerical interventionism. The Albanian proposal had been in the discard from the beginning—a fact which represented another tactical error in the already long list of errors committed by Depretis. For to reject Albania quite so brusquely and carelessly was to reject brusquely and carelessly a chance of obtaining Bismarck's co-operation, and this in turn was to inflict upon Italy an irredeemable injury in the approaching discussions for a Balkan settlement. Bismarck's goodwill was the one asset which might still have been salvaged from the failure of the mission, and it was part of Italy's persistent international ill-luck that Crispi should have fallen from power just as he was beginning to perceive it. For, maladroit as Crispi was in diplomacy and lacking in technical skill, he had still an intuition of what Bismarck's collaboration might mean to Italy. And he would never have tolerated either Cairoli's wilful neglect of international friendship or his peculiar view of Italy's place in the European hierarchy.

It was in fact reserved for Cairoli to make a positive policy of what with Depretis had been mere passive indifference. Where in February 1878 the Depretis Ministry had heedlessly

passed by overtures from England and Austria for the defence of "common interests,"⁶⁰ in March Cairoli not only dropped some promising negotiations begun by the Italian ambassador in London for an agreement with England on the affairs of Egypt, Tripoli, and Tunis, but deliberately rejected a new English proposal for the mutual defence of Italian-English interests in the Mediterranean. The rejection was perhaps partly due to the fact that his judgment on the international situation was ill-informed: but the lack of information, like the rejection, was intentional, and in harmony with it he later refused to read the files of Crispi's letters or listen to a private account of the incidents in his European tour.⁶¹ Over and above everything he wanted firmly to hold to his moral principles, in terms of which secret agreements and bargainings with other nations were as detestable as secret agreements and underhand bargainings with individuals in private life.⁶² Possibly, indeed, in his heart of hearts, he was not quite sure if honesty and intelligence were compatible in international affairs, distrusting the art of diplomacy both because he did not understand it and because it was something that forced him to a recognition of materialism and its problems—a recognition that was as temperamentally hurtful to him as it was intellectually repugnant. For it was precisely materialism that seemed to deride his philosophy and elude his mental powers, leaving him defenceless and weak before realities he did not comprehend. To ignore its problems was, however temporarily, to escape them; and in fact his foreign policy was an ostrich policy of burying his own and the Cabinet's head in the sands of self-satisfied idealism, hoping that the purity of their principles would—unsupported—secure their realization. "We shall not," he said, expressing his ideas with admirable clarity, "be clever: but we wish above all to be honest."⁶³ And this was the attitude underlying his conception of Italy's rôle in foreign affairs: "freedom from every engagement" and "clean hands." A conception that, followed through to its logical conclusion, sent Italy to the Congress of Berlin minus an understanding with any of the Cabinets of Europe—unallied with Germany, nobly disassociated from England, Austria, Russia, and France, dependent for the maintenance of

her interests on the talents of her own representative, Count Corti.⁶⁴

And it went almost without saying that Count Corti was unequal to the burden.⁶⁵ Timid in speech and taciturn of character, he too believed in Cairoli's ideal of "clean hands," comforting his disorientation in European affairs with the idea that Italy had nothing to gain at the Congress, and protesting against the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the most purely abstract and European grounds. Italy's former claim to compensation in the Trentino—that fringe of Italian borderland for which Crispi had fought with Bismarck—he allowed to lapse; and the diplomats at the Congress, given so ingenuous a foreign policy, would probably have vetoed any attempt at reviving it. "Why on earth should Italy demand an increase of territory?" said a Russian diplomat to Bismarck. "Has she lost another battle?" And the gibe indicated the kind of humiliation that Cairoli's diplomacy seemed to invite. For its upshot was inevitably diplomatic frustration and a national defeat as hurtful and bitter in its way as the defeats of Lissa and Custoza. Material disappointment, a lack of the territorial gains and political privileges so lavishly secured by others, would not alone have stung Italian pride so much: but that the nation had not even been granted the satisfaction of having its motives understood was an injustice that rankled and burnt. With its disinterestedness labelled passivity, and its humanitarianism, lack of worldly sense,^{66A} Italy felt herself to be emerging from the Congress "last among the nations of Europe," poor even in the moral prestige that might have offset her loss of political advantage. "He went to Berlin with clean hands that he might return with empty ones" was said cynically of Count Corti. And the contrast with the other diplomats of the Conference was indeed pointed—those diplomats amongst whom Waddington had secured an option on Tunis, Andrassy the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Disraeli—best of all—"peace with honour" and Cyprus.

Inevitably, Cairoli tried to justify his work.^{66B} The Italian representatives at the Congress had, he said, simply followed the traditional principle of Italian policy, "neutrality and

peace"; and in view of the interests arrayed against them, they could not usefully have done anything more. But even had these arguments been more valid than they were, they would not have weighed with a public whose anger over the "crime of Berlin" was only matched by grief as to its results. The loss of an opportunity to regain peacefully and honourably some part of "unredeemed Italy"; the maintenance, instead of the rectification, of a frontier that left Italy permanently and helplessly exposed to an Austrian attack over the Alps; the extension of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the shores of the Adriatic *vis-à-vis* from Italy's unprotected coastline; the abrupt loss of such diplomatic influence as the nation had begun to acquire in the affairs of Eastern Europe—these represented a setback so general that only an outstanding diplomatic success could have repaired the harm they had done. And unfortunately Italy had neither the potential military power, nor the money, nor the backing of friendly allies, nor even the diplomatic talent necessary for such a success.

The chief objective result of the situation was simply a great development in the Irredentist movement—the movement, that is to say, which aimed at restoring to Italy the Italian provinces still left under Austrian rule. It was a movement that had already caused much ill-feeling with Austria and was destined to be the cause of much more.⁶⁷ Organized by certain patriotic societies, with its aims enthusiastically and idealistically proclaimed under the very nose of Austrian ambassadors, it was sufficiently important to involve the Italian Government in some unpleasant diplomatic imbroglios. For tact and opportunism formed no part of the Irredentist programme, which was as direct and fiery as the spirit of its chief founder, Matteo Renato Imbriani,⁶⁸ a former officer in the Grenadiers and follower of Garibaldi. Working chiefly through newspapers (*Pro Patria* and *Italia degli Italiani*), pamphlets and articles, Imbriani represented a dynamic force in public life, and one which rapidly made an impact on popular consciousness. Great as a character and as a rebel (if not as a thinker and man of action), uniting the vision of an artist with the conviction of a fanatic, he too challenged

the materialism of the age, though in a different fashion from Cairoli. For conscious rectitude and cold-blooded moral deliberations were things as remote from his temperament as audacity and passion were part of it, driving him in the face of all opposition and defeat. "I am," he said of himself, "rebellious by character, by intellect, by education, by sentiment: rebellious against all oppression, all violence, and all intolerance: rebellious as truth must be against falsehood, light against darkness." It was a note that had not been heard in Italy for over a decade, recalling the days of the Expedition of the Thousand and the martyrs of Sapri, recalling in fact all "the heroic values" that the kingdom seemed to have lost since its creation and since the adoption of Visconti-Venosta's "wise inertia" as its maxim. "For the sake of unredeemed Italy we must not risk bringing redeemed Italy to ruin," said the more cautious politicians, alarmed by Imbriani's fulminations and by the recklessness with which he denounced Italy's "shame" and demanded "blood to ransom her." But their caution was shrivelled by his heated determination and the remorselessness with which he propagated his faith. For the Irredentism which he preached was not so much a political principle as a national myth and legend, a belief which should inspire its adherents to overleap the barriers of fact.

The Cairoli Government could easily have checked the spread of his ideas, suppressed the agitation which he encouraged, and stopped the publication of his pamphlets. But it remained quietly neutral, watching the development of the movement with almost scientific detachment. Public demonstrations were allowed to take place in the Northern cities following the news of the Congress of Berlin, and the strength of public feeling in Venice was sufficiently uncontrolled for angry crowds to attack the Austrian Consulate, tear down the Imperial coat of arms, and trample on it.⁶⁹ Cairoli's reasons for this policy (which certainly did not smooth Italy's diplomatic path or make easier her relations with Austria) depended partly on the character of the Liberal principles which he had always upheld and partly on the character of the Minister of the Interior, Zanardelli. For Zanardelli (who had already been Minister of Public Works under Depretis) was an individualist

à l'outrance, who regarded the State as a "necessary evil" and thought it should "rule" as little as possible—a man who as early as 1864 had become celebrated for his defence of public and private freedom, and was now determined to apply his doctrine, securing freedom of speech and association for Imbriani no less than for other upholders of heterodox ideas. His tenure of the Ministry of the Interior represented another phase in the old controversy over the formula "prevent (or anticipate) that you may not have to suppress," and "suppress, but do not anticipate." It was of course the latter formula that Zanardelli strove to defend, receiving therein the full support of Cairoli, whose loyalty to his ideals remained as uncompromising in internal as in external affairs. Freedom of the Press, freedom of association, of public meeting and discussion, were for both of them unchanging principles sanctioned by the *Statuto* and set far above either the personal interpretation of ministers or the fluctuations of public opinion. "I am," said Zanardelli, "proud to belong to those who believe in liberty," and he added that the country must have its effective reality and not its vain image, even though the government of liberty was more difficult than that of the gendarme . . . as Cavour had found.⁷⁰ Public order should, he said, be carefully and well maintained by a watchful administration: but the administration, though it should be inexorable in the suppression of disturbances, should never be arbitrary in their prevention. "Liberty within the law" should be the norm of administration, and there should be strict impartiality in its presentation.

The practical effect of these ideas was first to cause the resignation of the three Conservative (Right) members of the Cabinet, and secondly to produce almost an epidemic of public meetings ranging from Republican gatherings at which the cry was heard of "Long live the Republic!" to meetings of the Barsanti clubs and reunions of the Italia Irredenta societies, which lost no time in expanding their activities. With the Government apparently convinced that the generation of revolutionary fervour could continue unlimited as long as there was no expression of it in action (which was rather like expecting a child presented with a trumpet not to blow it) the number of Republican associations increased by nineteen

(making 227 in Italy as a whole),⁷¹ while the adherents of Irredentism proceeded from criticism of Austria to what was something like an incitement to war against her, supporting their campaign by arguments outside the limits of the arguments usually allowed in discussion of a neighbouring and friendly Power.⁷² Actually perhaps such behaviour created more noise and attracted more attention than it really deserved; and (as Zanardelli himself said in self-defence) if the Republican and Irredentist societies had been harshly dissolved they would in all probability only have been refounded in more secret and subversive forms.⁷³ But the fact remained that the continual agitation diminished public confidence in the Government, and in the end caused even the Left to wonder if so undiluted a dose of *laissez-faire* were either judicious or quite rational. As in foreign policy, the Cabinet seemed unable to reconcile fidelity to its ideals with response to the demands of reality, so that somewhere between the height of its theories and the spirit-level of fact its work came to an end and was broken. But in this regard, as in regard to international affairs, there was no real reason why sincerity should not have been reconciled with discretion, and Cairoli's principles adjusted in such a way that (without either corrupting them by compromise or deference to expediency) they should have been more workable in everyday life. For fundamentally what rendered the Zanardelli policy unpractical was less its loftiness than its doctrinaire rigidity, which would not allow it to be fitted within the framework of ordinary circumstances.

Still, the actual end of Zanardelli's ideal was determined by an outside circumstance which he could not possibly have foreseen—an attempt at regicide by an obscure youth from the Basilicata whose insane hatred of all crowned heads had suggested to him the idea of assassinating Umberto. On the 17th November, 1878, as the King and Queen entered Naples after completing a royal tour in the provinces, their carriage was stopped by Passanante springing on to the step and seeking to stab the King. What followed was proof of the quality not only of the King and Queen, but of Cairoli. For as Umberto skilfully evaded the first blow, and Margherita quietly called to the Prime Minister to "save the King," Cairoli flung himself

in front of the attacker and received the knife in his side. The blow killed, not the King, but the Ministry; for the next day, during some of the popular demonstrations against the crime, a bomb was flung among the innocent crowds (at Florence and again at Pisa), and the whole of Italy was shaken by a wave of anger against the formula "suppress, but do not anticipate."

In the Chamber the interpellations fell like hail, and Cairoli, ill though he was, endured some of the sharpest criticism ever brought against a Prime Minister. "The Ministry's policy," said Bonghi, a leading Right Deputy, "has been weak and lazy in action, rash in conception, a source of gratification to the most unstable and subversive elements in the country."⁷⁴ From one end of the peninsula to the other, said Minghetti, people are anxious, uncertain as to the future, conscious of a feeling that the Government lacks the strength to guide and secure the nation.⁷⁵ And even numerous groups of the Left added their quota of disapproval, showing themselves on this issue at least ready to vote against their own Ministry. Crispi pointed out that though the life of the King had been saved, the life of Italian institutions had been shaken.⁷⁶ Depretis, as suavely sceptical in Opposition as he had been politely disillusioned in power, declared that though it was understandable that the Cairoli Government should have wished to put into practice the principles it had professed in its programme, nevertheless Government office constituted a school where scrupulous fidelity to one's ideals (and who should have known it better than Depretis?) was not always possible, and where, in the application of principles, there was nothing absolute. . . .⁷⁷

Zanardelli's defence, brilliantly reasoned and vigorously combative, demolished most of the particular objections brought against his policy, but did not restore confidence.⁷⁸ And though Cairoli himself intervened, declaring that the blow at the King had not wounded Italian liberties, the Chamber remained firmly of another opinion. By 263 votes against 189 it rejected a motion favourable to the Government's policy, and on the next day Cairoli presented his resignation to the King. The era of "non-compromise" had

ended as cloudily as its predecessor, and the King, constrained by circumstances beyond his control, sent for Depretis.

Apart from its application of the "theory of liberty" in internal policy, the Cairoli Cabinet had also tried to solve some of the most pressing questions in home affairs, chief among them that of taxation. Already in announcing his programme of government Cairoli had promised to reform the taxation system in such a way as to lighten the burdens of the much-harassed working classes;⁷⁹ a promise that had not been taken very seriously since the public had come to regard this reform as a hardy Left perennial, flourishing in the climate of election times, but withering in the air of government. But for once public scepticism received a shock. Characteristically, Cairoli had meant what he said, and he brought forward a proposal for the abolition of the grist-tax in June 1878. The proposal did credit to his sense of honour, but not to his sense of finance. The tax brought in an annual revenue of 76 to 80 million lire; it represented one of the Budget's most dependable and solid pillars; and the position of the State's income was not so flourishing as to make its disappearance a safe concession. With expenditure ever increasing and revenue diminishing it was difficult to see how it would be possible to balance the Budget in future, let alone, as Seismit-Doda (the Minister of Finance) swore and promised, achieve a surplus.⁸⁰ Deputies of the Right, remembering the long battle they had waged to redeem the situation after 1866, protested bitterly against a policy likely to jeopardize their work; but their intervention only had the effect of making the issue degenerate into a party one, over which Right and Left fought, not so much from financial principle, as partisan rivalry. Only Sella remained apart from the heat of the debate—disinterested, unprejudiced, and quiet. "In the discussion," he said, "I have heard much talk of the 'Right,' of the 'Left,' and of 'parties'; I have heard less talk of 'Italy' . . . such discussion hurts me and induces in me the sensation I feel when private interests are put forward during the discussion of public affairs. . . . Can we not deal with the question of finance without talking of parties?"⁸¹ But his appeal did not find a response: and the Camera by 257 votes to 71 passed a Bill providing for the

total abolition of the grist-tax in 1883, and in the meantime a diminution of the tax on grain to take effect on 1st January, 1879. All that was now required to make the measure law was the Senate's approval.

The episode provided as striking a proof of Cairoli's good faith as the incident at Naples or the negotiations at Berlin: but like them it too showed the persistent antinomy between fact and aspiration which, running like a flaw through Cairoli's work, destroyed its balance and significance. For though he had proved to Italy—and at a time when proof was much needed—that a Prime Minister could not only have convictions, but the courage of his convictions, he had somehow lacked the power to prove their intrinsic worth. Perhaps this was what prevented his fall from having a tragic quality and kept his rule on the level of an episode in ordinary political life. The mediocre character of his work damned its creator, as though the relationship between his integrity and his ineptness was too close for the first to outweigh the second. And really, even as regards the grist-tax reform—a reform so courageously undertaken and so gallantly defended—he had not quite faced the issues involved. Was the grist-tax really as burdensome as it had been in the late 'sixties and the early 'seventies? Or was it not rather an object that had become surrounded with a nimbus of popular hatred? Was its suppression really justified by the financial situation? Could it be replaced by other and less burdensome taxes? They were questions which Cairoli left to his successor to answer; and Depretis, faced with an unexpectedly intransigent Senate, was to find them difficult to answer.

THREE GREAT ISSUES AND TWO
SMALL MEN!

THE manner of Cairoli's fall made the choice of a successor difficult, for he had been defeated by an essentially temporary coalition between Right and Left, and it provided no foundation for the formation of a new Government. A Ministry derived from the Right would have been completely against popular feeling. On the other hand, Cairoli's Cabinet had contained the most eminent personalities in the Left party, and those who had driven him from power were, with the exception of Nicotera, Crispi, and Depretis, men insufficiently known to fill a commanding position. Under the circumstances the King, from a feeling of personal gratitude, was inclined to summon again Cairoli and sacrifice Zanardelli as the minister most responsible for the situation.¹ But, testing the feelings of the Camera, it became clear that to maintain Cairoli would be impossible without an appeal to the country, and the most distinguished leaders of all parties were unanimous in considering it inopportune.² For these reasons, therefore, Umberto turned to Depretis—and Depretis, after some initial setbacks, solved the problem by building a Ministry composed mainly of average men, reasonably effective in the daily work of administration, but unlikely to cause complications by any outburst of creative thought.³ Character in the Cabinet would not, indeed, have harmonized with the type of policy he meant to pursue in his third Ministry—a policy that was, as usual, to consist mainly in putting off to the morrow any questions likely to cause difficulties in the present, and focusing the attention both of subordinates and critics on issues of minor routine, where passions could become safely heated and principles remain discreetly abstract. Except for the reform of the grist-tax (which had to be continued because Cairoli had gone too far for his successor to draw back) and the formulation of a scheme for railway construction, he avoided presenting the Chamber with material for serious

discussion, and steered the ship of state into the doldrums with real and foreseeing care. The question of public order—which had already lost most of its sensational interest—was put aside by a vague promise that it should be satisfactorily maintained, and the prevailing laws on the subject applied without either weakness or arbitrary interference. This left the grist-tax controversy as the main difficulty likely to confront the Ministry; and in point of fact the controversy, apparently so well settled by Cairoli, turned out to be alarmingly alive.

Depretis, himself a realist first and a democrat second, could hardly have felt any warmth over the disappearance of the tax from the Budget.⁴ But faced with necessity, he had no alternative but to announce firmly that the motto of his Ministry would be “neither grist-tax nor deficit”—and hope that the Finance Minister would provide a satisfactory answer to the conundrum.⁵ He was not entirely disappointed. Magliani—a brilliant exception to his somewhat nondescript colleagues, subtle, imaginative, daring⁶—considered that by increasing the taxes on sugar, coffee, alcohol, and oil, he could to a large extent fill the gap left by the vanishing tax. And, by promising the Camera an addition to the State revenue of twelve million lire from the tax on sugar alone, he persuaded a majority in the Camera to vote the enactment of his scheme. In reality it was a scheme more plausible than financially sound, and its detailed announcement did not impress the Upper House in the same way as the Lower. The Senate had not as yet given its approval to Cairoli’s original Bill concerning the abolition of the tax (for the Bill had been delayed in its passage up from the Camera): and now, confronted with the responsibility of deciding the whole issue, ill-at-ease over Magliani’s provisions, and resentful of the financial experiments which the Deputies seemed bent on making, it rejected the Bill and substituted an amendment of its own. Instead of lightening the tax on corn from January 1879, and providing for its total disappearance in 1883, the amendment proposed to diminish the tax on secondary cereals only, and leave vague the question of its future abolition.⁷ There was an immediate outcry. For the amendment was so fundamental as to represent practically

a new Bill, and the Camera felt itself wounded hardly less in its institutional dignity than in its constitutional prerogatives. Should the tax be abolished in the manner sanctioned by the Senate, or by the Camera? Had the Upper House the right to alter financial laws so drastically as almost to initiate new financial legislation? These were issues that, confusing the main one, presented Depretis with an excellent opportunity for evading its real discussion. Logically, as he had from the outset declared the measure to be Cairoli's by parentage and his merely by adoption,⁸ as he had furthermore distinctly encouraged the Senate to delay its deliberations in order to postpone the day when discussion would have to be replaced by action, it might have been supposed that the Senate's modifications would accord rather than not with his views. Actually, however, he decided to give battle because he felt that a vehement constitutional controversy would re-orientate the unpopularity which had begun to fasten on his Ministry. Gallantly attacking the Senate, he saw the development of a serious dispute between it and the Camera—a dispute in which members of the old Conservative Right defended the Senate's right of intervention, while a large section of the Left, led by Mancini, Crispi, and Depretis himself, theoretically and firmly denied it.⁹ Even the Left, however, was not united on the subject. For Cairoli (who with Seismit-Doda had proposed the very Bill censored by the Senate) still found Depretis's attitude unnecessarily extreme, and would have preferred to adopt some more moderate thesis such as that put forward by the Rapporteur, Pieratoni.¹⁰ Other sections of the Left either agreed with him (for instance, Zanardelli, Nicotera), or else had other reasons for dissenting from Depretis's methods, while yet others were frankly impressed by the Senate's realist warnings of another deficit in the Budget. Under these circumstances it was in vain that Depretis analysed the *Statuto*: in vain that he declared that while the Senate might reject or adopt laws—while it might even in the purely legal sphere modify them—it had no power over financial principles or the regulation of taxation. The Deputies, prepared to agree with him on the constitutional issue, were now definitely unhappy as to his practical approach,

and on the 3rd July, 1879, expressed their general doubts in a vote of no-confidence in the Ministry.¹¹

Their action created a situation as difficult to solve as the situation left by the fall of Cairoli. And in fact, the Right being still a minority in Parliament, and the Left apparently divided between Cairoli and Depretis, the King thought it necessary to retrace his steps and summon Cairoli again. It was a significant comment on the condition of politics and the factors which determined their character. For if the choice could be excused on the King's part by personal regard for his defender, it is difficult to see what excuse there existed for the Camera's acceptance of the choice. No one could be under any illusions as to Cairoli's talents in politics: and yet having uncompromisingly refused to retain him at the direction of public affairs only a few months before, the Camera was now ready—however coldly—to receive him back (17th July, 1879). Perhaps having already brought to power four Ministries in three years, the Left did not regard the formation of a fifth with particular seriousness; perhaps, knowing the composition of the fifth, it was already pre-occupied with the idea of forming the sixth. In any event, the return of Cairoli produced precisely and exactly what might have been expected of it; misfortune abroad, indecision at home.

This was not at once evident. For his Ministry, having publicly reaffirmed its promise to remove the tax, set about the task resolutely. Grimaldi, a young Deputy whose unusual talent and power of eloquence had been proved in the debate on the railways, was appointed to find a solution of the crisis. He did so by proposing that the Senate's modification should be accepted, the Camera simultaneously invited to pass a measure complementary to it, and the liberal law necessary to the situation be extracted in effect from the Camera's complement and the Senate's modification taken together.¹² The compromise was skilful. For it enabled the Camera to assert its independence without affronting the Senate's: it promised the poorer classes relief from their worst fiscal burdens, and it did so in a manner formally consonant with Parliament's idea. In accordance with the Senate's wish, that is to say, the immediate lightening of the tax was restricted



From "Don Pirlouccio," Rome, 1879

THE GRIST-TAX AND THE TAX ON SUGAR

Depretis and Magliani: "If you will bear this one too, we shall have equilibrium; otherwise everything is upset and we make an end."

to secondary cereals only; but in accordance with the Camera's the harshness of the restriction was mitigated by a second measure promising that there should be a reduction in July 1880 of the tax on all grains not already placed on the reduction list, and that the tax should be entirely abolished by January 1884.

Both laws were approved by the Camera on 20th July, 1879, and with the sanction of the Senate, the measure for the abolition of the tax on secondary cereals went satisfactorily into effect in August. Here, however, matters rested. The Senate, having re-approved its own modified Bill, was in no hurry to consider the Deputies' complement: and pleading pressure of heavy work and the end of the parliamentary session, it postponed discussion of the special measure to the next year. The interim (which would have been awkward in any case) was made abnormally so by Grimaldi's activities, for, working day and night on his financial estimates during the summer vacation, he made a disconcerting discovery—the condition of the finances so persuasively depicted as flourishing by Magliani was not only dubious, but, impartially calculated, foreshadowed a deficit of over six millions where Magliani had prophesied a surplus of over ten.¹³ Such a deficit meant inexorably that the Budget's equilibrium was already seriously upset without Cairoli's adding a complete removal of the *macinato*, and that the Senate's attitude in accepting a partial and delaying a total abolition was financially justified. In short, if the Ministry persisted with its proposals, it would be doing little more than giving the nation superficial relief by means of a fundamental deception. It was an unpleasant truth that Grimaldi, remembering only that he was a Minister of State (and not that he was the minister of a party), announced in uncompromising terms to the Cabinet. And the Cabinet, faced with his facts, broke into immediate dissensions—dissensions as a result of which Grimaldi and those he had convinced resigned, while Cairoli, finding his position as Premier untenable, followed their example a few days later.¹⁴

He was almost immediately re-entrusted with the formation of a new Ministry, and as its formation was impossible without a wider basis of support from the Left, he bought the support

by making a coalition with Depretis.¹⁵ It was a "Marriage" (*connubio*) that gave Depretis joint leadership of the Cabinet, and smoothed over, without extinguishing, the rivalry between the two. For Depretis, taking the portfolio of the Interior, obviously hoped for the reversion of Cairoli's position, while Cairoli could hardly have seen in Depretis anything but a means of propping up his power. As far from one another as the two poles in character, aspiration, and outlook, their union was a striking illustration of how far opportunism had replaced principles in the Camera, and office become rather a means of gratifying private ambition than an instrument for actuating conviction. Still, their Ministry managed to survive eighteen months, living on the weakness of its enemies, on the Left's determination to accept anything rather than a return of the Right, and on the public's general sympathy with their policy of removing the tax. For despite Grimaldi's figures, neither Cairoli nor Depretis meant to relinquish the abolition project. And indeed it had ceased to be a financial question, and become a general issue. In his speech for the re-opening of Parliament, Cairoli referred to the recent dispute as due to diversity of opinion: and though Grimaldi instantly replied with the retort (later famous in Italian history), "arithmetic is not a matter of opinion!" his objection was felt to be almost beside the point.¹⁶ For the Camera no longer considered the *macinato* a matter of arithmetic, but of party-programme, and as such immune from the chilling effects of dispassionate and honest analysis.¹⁷ To the Left, its removal symbolized the redemption of many democratic promises made and broken since 1876; it represented a defiance of the Right's activities in finance; and, finally, a method of differentiating their policy as a whole from that the Right had pursued. By this date the latter procedure was indeed somewhat necessary. For, point by point, the Left had found itself driven to follow in the Right's steps, losing more and more all pretence to originality or to that courageous energy to which it had once so ostentatiously laid claim. Lacking a "genuine ideal or moral principle of its own,"¹⁸ it had in reality already lost most of its prestige as well; and the removal of the tax represented a last and urgent bid for its recovery. On

the public's side, ill-informed as it was in regard to State finance, ignorant of fiscal machinery, and of the allotment and distribution of burdens, the issue represented primarily a social injury, felt so deeply and protested against so bitterly that it had become almost an obsession.¹⁹ Probably few reflected that the tax, if thrust into the museum of fiscal atrocities, would only be replaced by some other form of taxation liable to be equally galling (and in fundamentals, perhaps even more oppressive) unless preceded by some scientific readjustment of the whole financial structure. As a whole, men wanted what they felt to be obscurely "taxation-justice," and when they had gained the legal point thought they had gained (a very different matter) an equitable reparation of their wrongs.

As to the party of the Right, its attitude was no longer one of defending the imposition of the tax (which no one now seriously wished to defend), but of fighting for the integrity of the Budget, and of safeguarding that financial equilibrium which the nation had so laboriously and painfully attained.²⁰ From this point of view, the resistance offered by the party in the face of much unpopularity and repeated charges of insincerity, was admirable; and it gave rise to one of the most brilliant and hardly fought conflicts in the parliamentary history of Italy.

The chief difficulty arose, as before, from consideration of the means of replacing the income yielded by the tax. And on this issue Magliani met his match in Saracco, the Senate's Rapporteur on the Budget. Magliani (for he had been recalled to the direction of finance by the Depretis-Cairolì coalition) had relatively small difficulty in retouching his estimates and conjuring up from his extremely subtle mind an improvement in the Budget of thirteen millions, thereby triumphantly changing Grimaldi's deficit into a surplus.²¹ But even he could not make his thirteen millions appear possible or practical realities: or show that his proposed readjustment of the tax-system would be effective from a financial point of view. And Saracco, analysing both facts and statistics, demonstrated once for all that the Treasury could not afford to abandon the tax without first ensuring the Budget against financial danger.²² Under his leadership, attacks on Magliani's

thesis raged from the 12th to the 24th January, 1880, and in the end the Senate, convinced by his logic, decided to postpone all further discussion of the law until such time as adequate provision should have been made for the tax's substitution.²³ It was a refusal to which Depretis responded by abruptly closing the legislative session, though much work still remained to be done, and the closure could quite evidently provide no more than a temporary solution to his difficulty.

The re-opening of Parliament, however, showed his procrastination to have been rewarded. For in the interim foreign affairs had come to the front so prominently that anxiety over the external situation occupied first place in parliamentary debates. Relations with Austria, always on the verge of becoming strained, had become increasingly exasperated in proportion to the growth of Irredentism and the continued repression of Italian subjects under Austrian rule. With this complication looming on her North-Eastern frontier, with the potential uncertainty of French internal politics apparently menacing the North-Western, the Ministry for War felt justified in asking for a larger expenditure on army and navy, and the Camera—unfortunate and inopportune as it felt the demand to be—could not refuse compliance. A sum of over 80,000 lire was voted in connection with seven Bills designed to provide for munitions, fortifications, and the like, and the question of defence triumphantly absorbed that of finance. Scarcely, moreover, was this subject dealt with, than the Deputies found their attention engaged by the estimates for Public Works—and in disputing over the assignment of new roads, offices, buildings, etc.—over, in short, the distribution of new expenditure—appeared to have forgotten the tax. But the forgetfulness hardly availed Depretis. For on the 29th April, 1880, 177 Deputies against 154, moved by a wave of hostility towards all the general aspects of his policy, rejected a motion expressing confidence in the Government, and the Coalition Ministry resigned.²⁴

Its resignation created a situation that obviously suggested an appeal to the country. For with the Chamber irreconcilably divided into quarrelling groups: with the party which had the majority split by internal dissensions and discords—it was

unlikely that any Ministry would be able to achieve stability.²⁵ And in point of fact, the King, dissolving the Chamber, waited for the results of a General Election. It was this time unquestionably held more freely and fairly than that of 1876.²⁶ The Government abstained from employing against the Right the violent methods it had used in that year, and was, in fact, even ready to see some Right gains, provided they were at the expense of the dissentient Left—factions whose individualism did so much to hamper Left Ministries. In this they were to a certain extent gratified. The followers of Crispi and Nicotera—the two storm centres of the Left Opposition—returned in much diminished numbers, and the Right was strengthened by the addition of some fifty new Deputies, though they were gained from the Left as a whole.²⁷ Where the elections proved disappointing, and possibly even alarming, was in the continued and large numbers of abstentions (only 59 per cent of the electorate went to the polls) and in the confused state of mind which was evident in the country as a whole. Lacking any political criterion, or any definite and clear formulation of programmes, there was no clarity as to the issues involved; and the only outstanding and unquestionable point that emerged was the nation's determined resolve regarding the abolition of the by now famous—or infamous—*macinato*. So far as the composition of the Camera was concerned, it was unfortunate that much the same men returned to power as had been in Parliament before, and with them the same habits of wrangling, petty obstruction, and emphasis on private instead of public ends. It meant that in essentials the condition of the different parties was psychologically unchanged; that methods in politics were not really altered in kind; and that the King, with every objective justification, should call on Cairoli to form his third Ministry.²⁸

Whatever else it did, it was clear that this Ministry must at long last settle, and settle permanently, the question of the tax. And on the 29th May, 1880, Magliani submitted a series of new financial provisions, with a Bill for its gradual disappearance among them. It was Berti, a hitherto obscure Deputy, who, leaving his place among those who had opposed the measure, expressed the characteristic and general attitude

created in the Chamber and Senate by the country's firmness at the elections. "When," he said, "political interests are disturbed, the consequences are far more serious than those that derive from a mere upset of financial interests . . .," and, enumerating the popular demonstrations and agitations which the tax had provoked, he added—"When a tax gives rise to facts of the above kind, it seems to me that political interests demand its removal . . . by reason of what has occurred, the tax has become a *political tax*—hence it cannot remain in the Budget without causing agitations . . . and provoking the effects that I have already described to you." Agreeing with his view, the Camera by 178 votes to 78 approved Magliani's Bill on the 14th July, and a few days later it received the consent of the Senate.

Actually, the removal of the tax did not produce the effects which people had expected. A marked increase shortly afterwards in the duty on foreign corn made it a mockery of the poor,²⁹ and within two decades the rise in the price of bread was such that miserable "hunger riots" occurred in Sicily and the South. However, its removal from the list of parliamentary controversies at least left the Government free to turn its attention to other problems—and in this third Ministry of Cairoli's it was foreign policy that assumed first place on the horizon.

By a coincidence, his foreign policy was this time to involve him in a disaster worse than that of the Congress of Berlin. He had been spared a critical debate on his foreign policy at that time by the agitation over the attempted assassination of the King. But in the period following, foreign affairs had (intermittently) attracted a good deal of attention, and their development had even stimulated the Chamber to break through its normal lethargy on international questions. Keen debates had taken place regarding the different Ministries' negotiations with Powers abroad, and critics from both Right and Left had deprecated the spirit of ignorant indifference in which many of these negotiations had been carried out.³⁰ Perhaps for the first time, men had begun to realize the harm that could result to Italy from over-absorption in internal affairs: and perhaps for the first time not only Cairoli's atti-

tude, but that of Depretis, was appraised at its true worth. Deputies who had previously heard of the "umbrella" maxim with an indulgent shrug and a smile, began suddenly to reflect on the disasters it implied. And the anecdotes that were current about its author's career were far from reassuring them. There was, for instance, the story of his serene incompetence when asked to formulate Italy's views on the union of Eastern Rumelia and Bulgaria—a story perhaps as indicative of Depretis's character as it was typical of the general trend of Italian foreign policy since 1876. Inundated with official telegrams on the subject asking for instructions, Depretis had remained quietly fixed in his constituency at Stradella, opposing to the urgent queries of European ambassadors a mysterious and unbroken silence. This silence had been maintained till a visit from Count di Robilant (the Italian ambassador to Vienna), whose advice he had immediately asked. "Your Excellency," di Robilant had replied, "many and various replies might be made to these questions. . . . Italy's whole conduct in Eastern affairs will depend on what path is taken, and I cannot suggest a reply or give advice which may bind the action of the future Minister of Foreign Affairs." "That is of no importance. I am responsible," Depretis had answered (for he was at this time both Prime Minister and interim Minister of Foreign Affairs). "But" (from di Robilant) "it is necessary to know far more about the situation than I do." And Depretis—"But I know nothing about it either . . . when have I ever thought about Eastern Rumelia?"³¹

Actually, what is surprising is not that this attitude caused criticism in 1878, but that it had not done so years before. Some shock such as the "humiliation" of Berlin was, however, necessary to make public opinion and the Camera sensitive to points of prestige, and even when they had become sensitive, it was some years before they could make their new attitude felt, still less change the evil tradition in foreign affairs. Government action in this new period was no more clear-minded than before, and was no less irresolute and infirm of purpose. Intelligent criticism tended, indeed, to produce rather dissolution than closer integration in official thought, and even such well-directed sarcasm as that of Bonghi in 1879

resembled rather a cannon-ball shot at a crumbling edifice than the foundation-stone of a new building. Analysing the policy pursued by the Left since 1876, he had pointed out that there was small difference between the diplomacy practised by Depretis and that attempted by Count Corti. And he had gone on to show that the attitude of each was really summed up by the phrases commonly employed in their diplomatic correspondence: "We reserve" (from Depretis) and "we take note and thank" (from Count Corti). Neither the one nor the other had made any effort to co-operate in the settlement of European affairs; and it was this indifference which Bonghi considered to have been fatal to the whole Italian system.³²

He might well have regarded it as fortunate if he could have foreseen the results of an "interested" policy in Cairoli's third Ministry. For Cairoli had learnt nothing in the years since his first tenure of power; and his handling of the "Tunisian question" was quite as bad, if not worse, than his handling of the Berlin negotiations. The main difference was simply that this time the ineptitude was not Cairoli's alone. For he was caught between two fires of public opinion—between an aggressively vocal Irredentist group, demanding some effort at realizing its aims, and a general body of public opinion aware that Irredentist agitation could achieve nothing, yet anxious for some stroke of policy that would mean success abroad.³³ Unable to satisfy the Irredentists, he had either to satisfy the adherents of a "forward" policy or lose the support of his party; and as the party's views really coincided to a large extent with his own, he allowed them to become a directing force. Probably even he did not understand the full complexity of the Tunisian problem. And in dealing with it, the dynamics of the situation soon carried him and his party into difficulties of which he had never dreamt.

Actually, the tangle of interests represented by the Tunisian question included such apparently detached Powers as England and Germany, and a perfect series of rival Franco-Italian claims. Both countries could advance strong and, by international standards, almost equally valid arguments in support of their ambitions.³⁴ The Italians urged considerations of geography, history, economics, and strategy. Geographically

Tunis, it was said, was a prolongation of the Italian peninsula, linked to Italy by similarities of climate and strata and soil; historically it was the land of Carthage, the land where Regulus had met his death upholding the honour of Rome, where Zama had answered Cannae, and Scipio Africanus gained his name. Only 200 kilometres of sea separated Biserta and Sicily—Biserta, a naturally excellent port from whence a hostile power could at its leisure menace the heel of Italy; or, if events went differently, an Italian administration invite the emigration of its nationals from the over-crowded and over-settled peninsula. And indeed, lacking any official invitation, aware of the uncertainties and difficulties of settlement under the rule of a native Bey, Italian emigrants had nevertheless already begun to take up land in the territory, initiating small agricultural or commercial enterprises, and hoping that their presence would eventually receive the official recognition it seemed to deserve. By 1880, their advance had been so effective that there were actually 20,000 Italians in the land against 200 Frenchmen.³⁵

But if these were the bases of the Italian claims, the French could point to considerations almost equally striking. Geographically, Tunis might be regarded as an extension of the French colony of Algeria—or, as the French bluntly put it—"an Algerian suburb." If whoever possessed Tunis could menace Sicily, it was equally true that whoever possessed it could master Algeria; and if Italian settlers there far outweighed the French in numbers, the investment of French capital was greater than Italian, and France had far larger financial interests to defend.³⁶ By 1880, moreover, France enjoyed something like a monopoly of telegraph and internal communications facilities. Lastly—most cogent of all to the world of nineteenth-century politics—France was a Great Power. And her wants and their satisfaction were a matter of European concern. Where no one stood to gain by assisting Italy, the encouragement of French expansion was to the advantage of Germany and England. For to Germany it meant both that France would be hopelessly embroiled with her Latin neighbour, and that she would temporarily be distracted from the loss of Alsace-Lorraine; and to England,

already holding Malta, Gibraltar, and Suez, it meant that the narrow channel between Africa and Sicily should not become an Italian strait.

Under these circumstances, Italy's claims were from the outset likely to receive scant notice; and a skilful Minister of Foreign Affairs, as early as 1878, would have perceived that to insist on them would be most probably to insist on another diplomatic defeat. Indeed Italians themselves were aware of it, for no one in Italy really believed in the possibility of either annexing or occupying Tunis.³⁷ The object of Italian policy was formulated sincerely, as the maintenance of the "*status quo*"³⁸—the maintenance that is to say, of the native Bey in his position of independence from any authority (except vaguely the Sultan's)—and the hindrance of France from upsetting this arrangement to her own political and sovereign advantage. It was a policy psychologically intelligible and perhaps even inevitable, but peculiarly disastrous from a political point of view. What it amounted to was, in fact, a programme of inducing France to follow a policy of non-expansion, because Italy was not in a position to follow a policy of expansion herself;³⁹ expecting France, in short, to proceed side by side with Italy in the economic development of the territory, and counterbalance the increase in the number of Italian settlers presumably by an increase (minus a political safeguard) in the investment of French capital. Thus baldly stated, the programme appears almost incredibly naïve; and in many respects it did actually partake of Cairoli's leading characteristic. In others, however, it was compounded of wounded national pride, and represented a reaction against the results of 1878. With Bosnia and Herzegovina in Austrian hands, the Adriatic seemed to have become in popular language "a hostile sea"; and public opinion felt that with the French established at Tunis, the Mediterranean would fast be transformed into a French lake.⁴⁰ "Before we are constrained by facts," wrote Sonnino in the *Rassegna Settimanale* of 10th August, 1879, "we cannot resign ourselves to believe that Italy is so reduced, so isolated and held of little account in Europe as to make it impossible for her to obtain a just evaluation of her claim . . . a claim founded on the usage prevailing in

regard to public law, and which does not imply on the part of France any sacrifice of *amour propre*, or admissible material interest, since nothing is asked of her but abstention. . . . Still less can we resign ourselves to believe that Italy has descended to a position of such timidity and material impotence as not to dare to raise her voice concerning an interest at once so just and so important, and, raising her voice, not be able to make it respected."⁴¹

Sonnino was a realist—and if the truth of the situation (implicit in his very analysis) was too harsh for him to admit, it was certainly too harsh for the great majority of his countrymen. Resignation, submission, acquiescence, seemed impossible in the context of the day; considering this, the chief fault in Cairoli's policy was perhaps less its intransigency than its ineffectiveness. A policy of adjustment might have been pursued that would have led at least to compensation and a saving of face. Or a policy of determined resistance might have been built up by the formation of alliances, used to support a demand for territory elsewhere. But here three further factors came into play: first, the uncertain attitude adopted by French Governments in regard to Tunis—an attitude which perhaps provided the foundation for hopes it was never meant to excite; second, Cairoli's invincible personal belief that France would never inflict on Italy an injury so deep as the annexation of Tunis implied; third, the traditional francophilism of Cairoli and Depretis and other leading Italian politicians, nearly all of whom, though they might dispute with France over a territorial possession, could not endure the idea of an alliance directed against the one country in Europe with which they felt real ties of racial and cultural sympathy.

Considerations such as these inevitably deepened the mental confusion surrounding the issue. They allowed Italians on the one hand to imagine that all that was needed to arrange the Tunisian affair satisfactorily was a steady emphasis on their growing interests, while on the other it kept them from taking steps to make their influence politically or internationally effective. So they drifted gradually and almost unconsciously into the worse policy the situation allowed—a policy of

spasmodically agitating and complaining over Tunis, while offering to French enterprise a series of pinpricks which might goad, but could not seriously impede it. And on her side France, unable perhaps on account of difficulties of internal policy to come to an open decision concerning the possession of Tunis, allowed herself the luxury of a diplomatic war with Italy, in which she certainly won the immediate point at issue—which was Tunis—but lost (what was perhaps more important) the peace which followed. For the net result of her Tunis policy was to throw Italy into the arms of Germany, and it was a result far from being necessarily implicit in the solution of the problem.

The actual contest between the two Governments was initiated at the Congress of Berlin, where Tunis figured in the more secret diplomatic negotiations. As early as 1868 Bismarck had seen that the whole issue (linked with the more general question of control of the Mediterranean) might be regarded as an apple of discord flung by Nature between France and Italy—and had tried to demonstrate in terms of geography that Germany and not France was Italy's "natural ally."⁴² At the time his remarks had excited more suspicion in Italy than gratification; and his attitude at the Congress of Berlin, where—following his usual policy of offering to other people what was not his to give—he secretly advised first France and then Italy to secure the Regency's possession, had a similar effect. Asked by von Bülow why Italy did not take Tunis, Count Corti replied bluntly: "Vous voulez donc nous brouiller avec la France?"⁴³ And the same question put to the French plenipotentiary created similar mistrust. It was not until Lord Salisbury made advances on the subject—offering France a free hand in Tunis as a *quid pro quo* for England's action in Cyprus—that Monsieur Waddington accepted a secret understanding and re-formulated his views in a decisive and affirmative sense. Even then his conception of French aims was far from being shared by French official circles. "Ils (les Allemands) veulent nous foutre l'Italie sur le dos maintenant," MacMahon had said some time before, and his idea was still widely accepted.⁴⁴ Gambetta and the leaders of the Republican Party were especially opposed to African

adventures,⁴⁵ and the French attitude generally might have been summed up as wishing to hold a private lien on Tunis without the difficulties and complications of open activity. Accordingly when rumours of the Tunis understanding began to spread, and the Italian Government in alarm made official inquiries, the response given in Paris (and also in London) was reassuring. The English Government for its part issued an "absolute denial" of the declaration alleged to have been made by Lord Salisbury regarding the French occupation of Tunis;⁴⁶ while Waddington gave the Italian ambassador his "word of honour" that (so long as he was minister) no enterprise would be undertaken tending to alter the *status quo*—or, if the interests of France should in future require such action, it should not be undertaken without previous notice to Italy, and discussion of the compensation to which she might aspire.⁴⁷

This was in reality Cairoli's opportunity to preserve Italian prestige and secure at least some colonial territory for the Italian flag. France, it was clear, would have agreed to the discussion of a *quid pro quo*, and the matter might have been perhaps amicably settled. Instead, however, Cairoli concentrated his attention on the encouraging elements in Waddington's reply, and (linking it with the encouraging words of Gambetta) proceeded to develop his idea of a Tunis where French and Italian interests might proceed harmoniously and equally side by side. It was in vain that Cialdini in transmitting the statements declared that though this sincerity appeared to him undoubted, Italian diplomacy would do well to remain watchful and not allow itself to be surprised by events.⁴⁸ Some ground for a misunderstanding existed, and Cairoli proceeded to advance over it with all the obstinacy and blindness created by knowledge of the just limits of his intentions.⁴⁹ A warning by the Marquis de Noailles (French ambassador in Rome) that Italy "... can cherish no dreams of conquest in Tunis without risking the open enmity of France,"⁵⁰ was really a warning shot into the air; for Cairoli and his supporters were far from dreaming of conquest, and were liable to interpret a warning against it as an implicit acceptance of the advance of other forms of activity within

the Regency. In short, just as the French had failed to understand and check the vague Italian wish for equality of influence, so Cairoli (perhaps misled by the very completeness of Waddington's reassurances) failed to understand how deeply France felt herself committed in Tunis; failed to understand that actually he was dealing not with a subsidiary point of French interest, but a fixed and settled item of French policy, to which France meant to give expression as soon as expediency allowed.

For, supported by a large section of Italian public opinion, and fortified as he thought by Waddington's goodwill, Cairoli soon proclaimed to the Camera that Italy had "duties to fulfil" in regard to the Regency (19th April, 1880), and embarked on a process of maintaining her prestige there.⁵¹ It was, alas! a process as disastrous both in conception and expression as his efforts preceding the Congress of Berlin. But having seen the failure of his policy of international passivity, he was now ready to try one of activity, refusing to see that whether a policy were active or passive was of little significance so long as it was determined by almost complete denial of facts. Despatching a special deputy-consul on an unspecified "mission," he soon provoked the French Government into demanding to know the significance of Italian intentions;⁵² and from this point on, the comedy—or perhaps the tragedy—of errors developed with the regularity and sequence of variations on a set theme.

The leit-motiv was provided in Tunis itself by a personal rivalry that developed between the two consuls appointed to struggle for the interests of their respective countries. Well-matched in temperament and in ardour of purpose, approaching the Tunisian issue in the spirit of competitors confronted with a prize-bone, Signor Macciò and Monsieur Roustan manfully intrigued, manœuvred, outwitted, and fought each other, over a period of years—achieving little that was practical, but successfully adding the bitterness of their controversy to the general bitterness already accumulated between the French and Italian Governments. For, from this point on, the excitement of competition, the partisan spirit of inflicting rebuffs and slights as though scoring points in a

game of national interest, soon obscured the whole purpose of the dispute. Stimulated by the Press and by inflammatory speeches in the Camera, public opinion in Italy refused to appraise the situation calmly. Cairoli's Government, instead of being left free to take whatever action it might think best, was goaded by a stream of fervent and patriotic advice in the face of which return to a rational frame of mind was impossible and compromise appeared surrender. To attempt to insist—and when insistence availed nothing—to agitate and complain—this was the policy that public imagination seemed to demand, or, if it did not demand, produced.

A series of incidents brought matters to a climax. The first of them was unfortunately caused by Signor Macciò, who arrived in Tunis with a flourish of trumpets, military honours, and a guard of armed marines. "An almost incredible act of folly," remarked an English observer, watching the ceremony of disembarkation, and its bravura almost immediately provoked an act of retaliation on the part of Monsieur Roustan, who in March 1880 induced the Bey to cancel a concession he had granted for the construction of a cable between Sicily and the African mainland. This was met on the Italian side by intervention in the sale of the Goletta-Tunis railway line—a line actually constructed by an English company who were anxious to dispose of it as an unprofitable venture. When the matter was first brought to Cairoli's notice negotiations between the owners and a French syndicate were already in process, but, urged on by the Italian ambassador in London, he sent for the director of an Italian company (the Rubattino) and encouraged him to offer competition. In this way a railway that was actually worth 500,000 lire was finally raised in price to over two million five hundred thousand—for which sum the French company by desperate counter-bidding managed to secure possession. It might have been supposed that Cairoli and his Cabinet would now have realized their mistake and let well alone. But, promising the Rubattino Company financial support, they incited it to contest the validity of the deed of sale. And in an English court of law the Rubattino Company was in fact able to prove its objection legally sound; the contract of purchase was

annulled, the railway reserved for adjudication between the rival claimants—and on the 7th July, 1880, the Rubattino Company, by carrying its offer to the enormous figure of four million one hundred and twenty-five thousand lire, was triumphantly adjudged the owner.⁵³

Its acquisition was the signal for the despatch of three French warships to the Tunisian coast, and a demand by Monsieur Roustan—now fulminating with wounded national pride—for the concession by the Bey of at least two railway lines to French interests (plus a promise to grant no further railway concessions to the Italians), and the gift of the privilege of constructing a port in Tunis itself.⁵⁴

An effective reply to this could not be made by Signor Macciò for some months, and it was not until February 1881 that he struck his counterblow, and in doing so finally settled Tunis' fate. For on that date, while King Umberto and Queen Margherita were on a tour of Sicily, a deputation of Italian colonists was transported from Tunis to give proof of their loyal sentiments; and in doing so, presented an address of so desperately indiscreet a character as to suggest that Tunis would at any moment come under the rule of the House of Savoy. The next day, moreover, the brother of the Bey of Tunis was officially presented to Umberto, and in an interview of a most cordial character presented the compliments and good wishes of his prince.⁵⁵

This was the turning-point in the dispute. So soon as news of it was received, the French Government decided to hasten its occupation of the Regency and put an end to the invasion of Italian competition. An opportunity soon presented itself. For towards the end of March some Tunisian border tribes (the Kurmiri) made a raid into Algeria; and the French Government was able to announce that, since the Bey evidently could not maintain order, a punitive expedition by France was essential. Actually there was nothing unusual in such a raid. Over 2,000 had occurred between 1870 and 1881;⁵⁶ but by judiciously recalling the fate of the gallant Flatters expedition (massacred by Touaregs some time before), by declaring that the honour of France demanded the protection of her nationals, French public opinion was roused

and the Chamber of Deputies induced to vote the necessary credits. Still, the French Government did not wish openly to announce its intentions. And Saint-Hilaire in addressing the Italian ambassador stated that for the moment the expedition would be limited to the punishment of insurgent tribes, without in the least contemplating permanent military occupation, still less an annexation.⁵⁷ This was on the 1st April; on the 7th the statement was reiterated, though with the qualification that the French Government must allow itself to be "guided by events";⁵⁸ and in the following weeks the French army did in fact allow itself to be "guided" into occupying Biserta, and on the 12th May assuming a protectorate over the Regency. (Treaty of Bardo, 12th May, 1881.)

The news created, of course, a veritable storm of indignation in Italy. Already in the first week of April the Camera, suspecting the worst, had demanded some explanation of the French advance from Cairoli; and Cairoli had unhesitatingly declared that he considered the occupation of an entirely temporary nature. Questioned more closely, he had also expressed himself as satisfied that no agreement regarding Tunis has been made between England and France at the Congress of Berlin, and, in order to demonstrate that his policy had not "isolated" Italy, he had added that there was identity of views between the Italian and English Governments on the subject!⁵⁹ His speech had inevitably left the Camera sceptical, and he had been indirectly forced to resign, only to be reinstated shortly after by the King. It was a non-constitutional procedure that roused still more feeling against him; and by the end of the month criticism of his work had reached its apex. In a striking speech Bonghi unconsciously composed the epitaph of his policy, and pointed out the hopeless illusion on which it was based. "It is not," he said, "by wrapping oneself in the illusions of the brotherhood of peoples that one must direct foreign policy; but by experience of facts and direct judgment of the passions which animate them, of the aims at which they aspire, of the desires which each has, to acquire influence and power."⁶⁰

Actually, this was the mildest criticism which Cairoli received, for in the next weeks interpellations followed hard

on one another until the news of the Treaty of Bardo made further discussion useless. Two days after its signature Cairoli, relinquishing his Ministry in as unconstitutional a manner as he had previously re-assumed it, declared that his Cabinet could not submit to any interrogations on the subject, and had therefore offered its resignation to the King. It was the end of his political career, and the end, too, of a certain phase in Italian history. For the rebuff destroyed something more than expansionist illusion. It destroyed also a fundamental element of hope and self-confidence in the nation. Men felt obscurely that Italy had received the stigmata of failure, and regarded the wounds to her pride almost as a permanent censure on her people. It was no longer a question of an inept or mistaken "policy," but of a deep-rooted sense of defeat. No other failure since the kingdom's creation had made so deep an impression—and it meant that failure was henceforth illogically but emotionally associated with the parliamentary régime.

This feeling did not at once take hold. When the dust and heat of the struggle had settled, internal politics at least were seen to be proceeding along much the same lines as before, and politicians, unshaken by the storm, to be resuming their normal routine. The shame and grief so generally felt did not find an outlet for expression, and the issue which dominated the next year was one curiously abstract and academic in character—the reform of the franchise. Actually, it was not a reform demanded by those who were (presumably) to enjoy its benefits. For the very number of abstentions from voting at General Elections had already indicated how little such a right was valued in the Italy of the day. In 1874, only 55·69 per cent had voted; in 1876 this figure had increased to 59·22 per cent, but in 1880 it was still only 59 per cent.⁶¹ The reformers indeed argued that this indifference existed only in the enfranchised classes—and that a real wish for the right to vote existed among the masses; but actually this argument was contradicted by the facts. Among the peasants especially the whole question of the franchise was surrounded by an atmosphere of scepticism—of resigned and cynical acquiescence

in the wire-pulling and graft of politicians and electoral agents respectively. Secret pressure, official interference, intimidation of various kinds had all helped to undermine any original respect that might have existed for the idea of the suffrage; and many anecdotes could have been told to illustrate the feeling of popular contempt which it was liable to arouse.

Real interest in the issue was restricted to the Deputies themselves, to intellectual circles in Rome or the larger cities, to innumerable administrative officials scattered throughout the provinces, and (inevitably) to university students, pleasantly surprised to find themselves presented with so rich a source of agitation. And yet this limit to the boundary of discussion did not mean a limit to the intensity and ardour with which it was carried on. Perhaps no debate in Parliament called forth more disinterested generosity and more genuine loftiness of thought. Nothing could be further from the truth than to imagine that the idea of extending the franchise was simply a device for obtaining more popular favour. In the political climate of the day, with its shadow of international humiliation, its consciousness of national poverty and resources inadequate to stand the strain of events, electoral reform represented for many men an attempt to re-invigorate a system that seemed to have entered upon decay without ever having attained to health. For indeed, the psychology represented by Depretis's rule was far from being generally accepted or regarded as an inevitable part of political life. Doubts and regrets and questionings had been felt perhaps from the first year of his government; and they had grown with every year that Parliament descended deeper into the quicksand of daily intrigue. "We are in a slough—and we are in it up to our eyes," Spaventa had said as early as 1885. And though the pessimism represented by his view was exaggerated, it expressed a state of mind common enough among his colleagues. They felt their experience of political life was a bitter disillusionment, and a disillusionment all the more intense and bitter because it was the disillusionment of first experience. Unfortified by other and happier contacts with political reality, they easily transferred the colours of their

déspair to the situation with which they were confronted, finding in its pattern only the elements of disintegration and defeat. It was, for instance, Garibaldi who in 1881 repudiated this Italy "miserable at home, and humiliated abroad": and there were other thinkers who, sharing his view, yet felt that the cure for it was not repudiation of their ideal, but an appeal to Italy against a section of Italians. They thought of the reform of the franchise, therefore, not as the abstract and theoretical question which, given Italian conditions, it really was; but as a means of redeeming the future of politics from the evils that had corroded their past.⁶² The hindrance of governmental and provincial corruption; the awakening of a new force of inspiration, the creation of a new ideal that should at once stabilize and yet stimulate political life—these were some of the returns they expected from calling the "disinherited" to the polls. If they argued and fought over minor points, if they delayed and hesitated—it was not from uncertainty as to the end desired, but only as to the best means of attaining it.

Many Deputies, it is true, did not regard the issue in quite this lofty spirit. There were enough axe-grinding politicians and partisan supporters seeking to obtain their personal advantage; and yet in the Camera at least they were almost certainly outnumbered by men whose sincerity in seeking a remedy for Italy's difficulties could hardly be questioned. Indeed the chief fault in the handling of the matter was not self-interest or selfishness; but merely failure to reflect adequately on the complex causes underlying the difficulties of the time. Bewildered by the country's evident malaise, feeling themselves vaguely responsible for its spiritual and mental disharmony, they over-simplified the problem and its solution, and thought that when they had widened the basis of parliamentary life they had narrowed the gap between the people and their representatives. Actually the evil produced by this gap was dependent rather on the evils which had come to characterize parliamentary life than on the existence of a narrow franchise; and their real improvement would have been better obtained by a drastic reform of the existing political system, than by a process of bolstering it up with new votes. For so

long as electoral corruption remained an accepted tradition, so long as the dissolution of parties within the Parliament made of the Deputies ineffective atoms in an organization of personal groups, the mere extension of the franchise would not break through the vicious circle in which political life was involved.

Instead, given the moral, intellectual, and social conditions of Italy, it was more likely to liberate a new cycle of secret influences, and even bring forward a series of demands and interests whose satisfaction would place the Government in a more embarrassing position than before. With the financial system already overstrained, with the State unable to meet the requirements made on it—the addition of importunate new groups *made articulate only to be denied*, could in reality only mean an additional element of instability.

Fundamentally, the most vicious characteristic of contemporary politics was the decomposition of the parties. Enough has already been said on their internal disunion to indicate the reasons for it. Disintegration had been inherent in their character (especially the Left's) from the beginning, and with it factionism, and a general inconsistency of idea and purpose.⁶³ Year by year the personal rivalries between the different leaders had helped still more to disrupt what original coherency of will had existed, and while on the Right Sella and Minghetti, Lanza and Peruzzi had failed to harmonize their private differences, on the Left the bitter feeling between Nicotera and Zanardelli, between Crispi and Cairoli, between Depretis and Baccarini, had actively broken up the ranks of the party, and made it increasingly a coalition of dissident groups.⁶⁴ Involved in opportunist intrigues, very often almost against their will, forced to share in subterfuges that seemed to them as unworthy as they were distasteful, most of the Deputies had lost faith in their party programme, and, what was worse, lost faith in their own functions as members of a representative House. While the Left made its attempt to govern, the attitude of the Right was one of Resignation rather than Opposition—an attitude partly due to the discouraging effects of the unpopularity with which it had been (unjustly) surrounded, and partly to a lack of tenacity and

critical stamina among its members themselves. As for the Left, it had so often made a parade of its ideals only to retract or abandon them, that its very adherents spoke of their work with self-distrust, with regret, and weakening scepticism regarding the future.

They had indeed, taken office with the promise of liberal decentralization, and had continued rigid centralization.⁶⁵ They had sworn to abolish the grist-tax—and had finished by replacing it with an increased tax on grain and flour. They had advocated a general lowering of the contributions demanded from citizens—and had instead vastly increased expenditure and the number of exactions necessary to meet it. Even in foreign policy, beginning with championship of Irredentism, they had passed to the opposite principle of repression, and so far as internal policy was concerned had wavered with no shadow of consistency between the formula of the State's unchallengeable supremacy and that of the free rights of the private citizen. And it was this perennial inconstancy of purpose, this curious mental attitude in which principles and opinions seemed always in a state of flux, that had brought political life to a point where it seemed further advance was impossible.

This had been the background to the situation of 1880, when, after the fall of the Cairoli-Depretis coalition, the King had appealed to the country in the hope that it would return a stable and compact majority to the Chamber. At that time, the lack of any unity among the Deputies had been such that literally no Ministry could count on retaining enough support to live. As a (Left) Deputy remarked, a "state of crisis seemed permanent in Parliament," and Ministries followed one another with extreme rapidity merely "because nothing was involved in their tenure of office but the question of whether power should belong to one, or to some, or to all, the leaders of the party together."⁶⁶ Instead of functioning as a whole, the party was divided generally into two or more bands almost equal in the number of their adherents, and prepared to wage ruthless war on one another and on the Government, until faced with the possibility of a return to power by the Right—a contingency that could be relied on

to produce a truce of co-operation in order that their side of the Chamber should retain the victory. An excellent picture of the resultant disorganization was given by Bertani in 1880, when in a parliamentary speech he said that: "The Camera, divided and subdivided into various groups, does not offer the possibility of a federation . . . that . . . would assure us as to the life of the Liberal party. The Ministry lacks that electric force which creates life, and it lacks that steely temper at once flexible and unyielding which knows how to resist and yet not break. . . . We (Deputies) grieved by the advanced dissolution (of the Camera) . . . ask nothing, and think of nothing but the resurrection of a new life, potent, efficacious, well-loved by the country."⁶⁷ And with this might be compared the speech of Brin, also made in 1880, and made in the strictest spirit of impartiality: "I believe we are at one in recognizing the evil and its causes: the majority in the Camera is to blame for not arriving at some agreement that would enable it to form a Ministry and sustain it. The Ministry (of Depretis) is to blame because it does not seek to form—or at least does not succeed in forming—this Majority."⁶⁸

Such an opinion was by no means uncommon among the Deputies as a whole, and it formed the context for the discussion of electoral reform. Actually the project of a law to extend the franchise was not a new one.⁶⁹ From 1864 on, individual Deputies had made persistent efforts to bring it before the Government's notice, and had repeatedly initiated a discussion of it in the Camera. In May 1872, for instance, Cairoli and Nicotera had suggested giving the suffrage to all literate citizens over the age of twenty-one, and they had repeated the proposal in 1873, when they had succeeded in having a Commission appointed to report on its merits. This Commission had suffocated the question with an adverse verdict, but it had been resuscitated by the Left's rise to power in 1876, when Depretis had included electoral reform in his promised democratic régime. This time Nicotera, as Minister of the Interior, had again induced the Camera to submit the issue to a Commission, but as it presented difficulties likely to cause more dissension than the Cabinet was prepared to face, he had done so in a manner calculated to bring about

its indefinite postponement. In a pompous preamble to the royal decree appointing the Commission, it was set forth that it had been created in order to "collect statistical material concerning the history of political elections in the Kingdom of Italy, to study all the reform proposals which had been made for the regulation and extension of the electoral right, to ensure its exercise, and to re-establish full agreement between the electoral law and the other laws which determine the rights and obligations of citizens; to propose provisions which may efficaciously lead to . . . the extension of the electoral right to all those citizens who, according to the spirit of the institutions, could be called on to select the representatives of the nation." With such a programme before it, the Commission had obviously every excuse for burying itself permanently in investigations, and, indeed, by the time its report was finally published, the divergence of view between Nicotera and Depretis (regarding the extent to which the franchise should be widened) had effectually relegated the issue to the background.⁷⁰ Two years had not passed, however, before Nicotera renewed his suggestions for some general reform, and after this, in March 1879, Depretis took the first serious steps towards its realization. Between April and December 1879 a practical measure was submitted to the Camera's critical examination, and a serious debate on it was only held up by the dissolution of Parliament in 1880.

This was the dissolution brought about by the general factionalism in the Camera, and the inability of the leaders to command a stable following. It was a crisis that, as already indicated, had produced much self-searching and reproach on the part of the Deputies themselves, and had clearly influenced their attitude towards alterations in the political structure. Accordingly, when Cairoli returned to power in May, he resumed the study of the problem with vigour. A Bill dealing with its salient aspects was presented to Parliament on 31st May, and aroused genuine sympathy. Amidst the applause of the Left, Cavallotti (a noted popular leader) called on the Camera to swear that it would not adjourn for its summer vacation until the measure was passed, and his exhortation was received with enthusiasm.⁷¹ In reality, the pledge represented a some-

what unfortunate piece of rhetoric, incapable (as Nicotera and Minghetti warned the Deputies) of realization. It was already the beginning of June, and by the 13th July the Commission appointed to consider the Bill was still far from having finished its labours. However, the interest displayed had at least had a good effect on the selection of the members of the Commission; and with Zanardelli as its Rapporteur, and Coppino, Crispi, di Rudini, Lacava, Mancini, Minghetti, Nicotera, and Sella among its members, it represented a collection of the best elements from all parties, as well as a formidable body of informed opinion. From both the legal and political standpoint, its report, when finished, was a monument of scientific learning, and it was laid before the Camera in December 1880. Discussion of it began after the vacation, on the 24th March, 1881, but had to be suspended after a month by reason of the commotion excited over Tunis. Resumed again in May, the small attendance of Deputies in the House indicated that interest in the subject had waned, and the announcement of Cairoli's resignation sent it temporarily into oblivion without any particular protest being raised.

About this time an attempt had been made to generate enthusiasm for the issue in the country generally. But despite the best endeavours of the Radicals, such enthusiasm as there was, had remained an essentially synthetic product. Garibaldi, triumphantly overcoming his age to deliver more or less revolutionary speeches at both Genoa and Milan, had not really disturbed the public's apathy, and the Government had wisely allowed him to talk unchecked.⁷² Here and there popular meetings had been held, but even the great meeting summoned at Rome under Cavallotti's presidency—a meeting in which the people had been expressly incited to re-conquer for themselves the right of universal suffrage—had not attracted a large attendance.⁷³

Moreover, public attention had been distracted by the question of finding a successor to Cairoli, and of establishing a Ministry strong enough to restore public confidence after the Tunis debacle. There seemed at first a hope that power would be entrusted to a capable, reformist Ministry directed by an enlightened and realist mind. For the King summoned

Quintino Sella, the ex-Minister of Finance, and Sella, turning to the Left Centre and Moderate Left, tried hard to compose a Liberal and stable Government.⁷⁴ He was worsted, less by any antagonism to his personality or policy, than by a memory of his Right antecedents and the part he had played in tenaciously maintaining the grist-tax after the occupation of Rome. The various groups of the Left clearly indicated that a Ministry under a Right leader would be unacceptable to them, while at Milan popular demonstrations took place against the man who had been nicknamed the "starver of the people."⁷⁵ Sella, therefore, was forced to resign his attempt, and the King, unable to find a practical alternative, reverted again to Depretis, who on 29th May constituted a new Cabinet, assuming the premiership and Folio of the Interior, and calling Mancini to Foreign Affairs, Zanardelli to Justice, and Berti to Agriculture. It was an unusually talented Cabinet, and, strengthened by its talent, and by the obvious necessity of finalizing the franchise question once for all, Depretis made a vigorous reference to the franchise in outlining his programme of government. It was, he said, necessary to carry the project of electoral reform to a conclusion, and in fighting for it he would, like the ancient Spartans, return either with his shield or on it.⁷⁶

The long-awaited and final debate on the subject was therefore begun in June. It was remarkable for a series of brilliant speeches, in which the leaders of the House vied with one another in scientific analysis, in reasoned exposition of their views, and in apt citation from the parliamentary experience of other countries. Certain definite attitudes regarding the question had already been apparent in the discussions under Cairoli's Ministry, and they appeared with even more distinctness on this occasion. Thus, opinion on the Right was still that previously typified by Bonghi when he had wished to base the extension of the franchise on a tax qualification;⁷⁷ while on the Left the arguments advanced in favour of universal suffrage by Marcora and Saladini and Sidney Sonnino received new support from the speeches of Fortis and G. Bovio. "Only that power is lasting which is based on free consent," Sonnino had said, quoting Machiavelli. And Bovio warmly upheld the view that all citizens were entitled

to a voice in the election of their representatives. In other respects, however, opinion in the Camera was divided, and its cross-currents showed an interesting variety of views. Crispi wished all Italians to be electors who had attained their majority and enjoyed civil and political rights, but he was in favour of excluding illiterates.⁷⁸ Depretis, differing from him in other respects, was nevertheless of the opinion that without ability to read and write, electors could have little idea of the functions they were called on to fulfil. Zanardelli, otherwise Liberal and democratic in his conception, remarked that the vote of illiterate electors could easily become a tool in the hands of reactionary forces, and illustrated his argument by reference to France, where, for instance, at the time of Louis Philippe the principle of universal suffrage had received the support of the Legitimist Press.⁷⁹ Still more diversity of view existed in the Camera on the question of whether voting should be according to the old "collegio-uni-nominale" principle, or according to the *scrutin de liste*. This question indeed caused more dissension than that of the qualification for the suffrage. Most Deputies felt their faith in the old system severely shaken, and, influenced by the example of France, thought that an experiment with a new method might yield better results. Against them there were important thinkers whose knowledge of Italian conditions told them that the *scrutin de liste* was likely to aggravate, rather than moderate, the evils it was supposed to cure. And the two views came into direct and striking opposition in the speeches of Lacava and Fortunato.

The idea of the *scrutin de liste* was greatly to increase the size of a constituency in order that the Deputies it elected should be less dependent on the tyranny of local interests. By enlarging the area of their district it was hoped to secure men with a more national point of view, and encourage the formation of organized parties on national issues. By the terms of the proposal, three districts were to elect two Deputies, sixty-one districts to elect three, thirty-six districts to elect four, and thirty-five five.

In theory the scheme appeared to have solid advantages, and Lacava in upholding it said he expected it would widen the consciousness of electors, banish every idea of localism,

abolish illicit electoral ties, and render deputies more worthy of their office. Finally, he even added that he thought it would hinder Government interference in elections and check the spread of corruption.

In reply to him, a young and later famous Deputy, Fortunato, made a striking speech in which he pointed out the defects which would make the system a practical failure.⁸⁰ To group certain constituencies together in one aggregate mass was not, he remarked, enough to implant in the electors a consciousness of the collective needs of the nation. Instead, the *scrutin de liste* would fix the consciousness of local interests more firmly. Where under the old system of 508 constituencies represented singly by 508 Deputies, small local interests tended to be lost in the collective interests of the nation, the new system would give them additional importance by making them part of larger units, limited in number to 135. Under these circumstances, local interests would assume the rank and proportion of provincial interests, would impose themselves more rigidly on the unfortunate electoral candidates, and would even have four or five Deputies competing with one another to satisfy them. "The larger the constituencies in area and size and population, the greater will be the menace of local interests, because the chorus raised in their defence by the representatives of a plural constituency will always be stronger than the solitary voice of the representative of a single one"—and developing the theme, he showed in detail how the system would actually increase corruption, how the concentration of electoral districts would facilitate interference with the electoral machine, and how, finally, it would multiply the groups and sub-groups already vitiating political life.

His criticism was vigorously combatted by Zanardelli, speaking at considerable length and basing his defence on analysis of the experiments with the *scrutin de liste* in France.⁸¹ But he met with firm opposition from a number of Deputies who feared they would not be re-elected if the enlargement of constituencies were adopted. And on their insistence, a motion was finally passed detaching the question of the *scrutin de liste* from the general question of the extension of the franchise. On 29th June, 1881, a measure regarding the latter was passed

by the Camera with 202 votes against 116; and on 20th December it received the Senate's approval. The Bill providing for the introduction of the *scrutin de liste* was voted on 14th February, 1882, and passed by the Senate in May of the same year.

In its final form, the law regarding the franchise removed the old property qualification, and gave the vote to all males over twenty-one who had passed an examination on the subjects comprised in the course of compulsory education.⁸² As the course of compulsory education was of a low and even elementary standard, this was more liberal than it sounded: and it was rendered more elastic by a provision that the examination might be dispensed with if the voter paid a direct tax of nineteen lire eighty centesimi, or some form of (specified) rent. Other exempted classes included officials and men who had received a medal for military or civil service. It was a law that in practice more than tripled the number of electors, raising the figures from approximately six hundred thousand to over two million. The form in which it did so was, however, far from being socially equitable. For, as the number of schools at which elementary education could be obtained was greater in the North than in the South, it put the South at a definite regional disadvantage. In the same way, it arbitrarily increased the political influence of the cities, because in them the proportion of illiterates was smaller than in the country districts. Many small rural proprietors of good social and economic standing were excluded by inability to pass the literacy test, and yet over two-thirds of the new electors received their rights by virtue of it.

Experience of the *scrutin de liste* principle moreover showed many of Fortunato's prophecies to be entirely correct. Although the system was maintained till 1891, it was as little satisfactory in Italy as in France. The organization and power of local wire-pullers grew with the increase in the number of Deputies elected in a district, while the Deputies' influence over the ministers and the provincial officers was greater than ever before.⁸³ Neither reform therefore did much to check the evils slowly penetrating the parliamentary structure, and in a few more years they were to reach their culmination in the system of "trasformismo."

THE POLITICS OF PESSIMISM

THE chief result of the struggle regarding Tunis and the failure of the reform of the franchise was psychological. They were issues with a spiritual aftermath. Yet it would be difficult to describe this aftermath exactly. Psychological unrest had been characteristic of the nation since the days of its founding. There had always been self-distrust and weariness and the illusion of hope too long deferred. What now gave this feeling more complexity and force, what drove its roots deeper into the national consciousness, was the fact that private despair seemed to have suddenly received objective and public confirmation.¹ It was as though the two incidents, more especially that of Tunis, had dealt wounds to the national spirit; wounds so deep that they sapped resistance and overshadowed effort with the chill of persistent defeat. Everything Italy had undertaken in international life seemed to have ended in disaster; and for so young a nation the image of itself in a perpetual context of failure was a crushing and haunting one. In the long course of difficulties at home, of financial strain and economic privation and administrative blunders, few people had formed to themselves a picture of how their country and her policy appeared to Powers abroad. The universal enthusiasm which had once surrounded the name of Garibaldi, the nimbus of popularity and glory which had clung to the Risorgimento, had served almost as traditions, or perhaps more accurately necessary illusions, keeping Italians from a true estimate of their place in the European world. The rebuffs of Berlin and of Tunis were like sharp recalls to reality, a harsh awakening from a world of subjective thought. So many of the politicians after 1876 had lived somehow in an atmosphere of national introspection, thinking only in terms of Italy and her needs and ignoring that principle of reciprocity which in international relations might have won for them so much. Self-preoccupied and sunk within the restrictions of provincialism, they had unconsciously lost sight of the

European horizon and seen problems only as they appeared silhouetted against the small rim of national hopes and fears.

This was partly the fault of circumstances. They had so long been compelled to lead an inward and contracted life that the postulates of an expanding and adventurous Europe were outside the range of their vision. For them relations abroad were still to be interpreted within the structure and frame of their own existence. Thus they had seen nothing really culpable in their instinctive vacillation between what they thought to be Italy's need of security and what they knew to be her feelings of racial affinity. It hardly occurred to them that their wavering between France and Germany would, objectively considered, seem more self-seeking. It was inevitable, it was natural, to turn to France; and if a clash of interests made an *entente* with France impossible, it was inevitable, it was natural, to turn to Germany, though always with the hope of a renewed understanding with France. Their reasoning had not gone beyond this; and they had given Italy the reputation of being a force as unreliable in alliance as in hostility, without being in the least aware of the significance of their actions. The cruel reflection of their indecision which now faced them was felt to be something distorted and actively unfair. "A nation that does not know how to be either a friend or an enemy," Bismarck had said contemptuously during the Tunis negotiations, and on numerous occasions had gone out of his way bitterly to disparage Italian politicians and the people they were supposed to represent.

A nation suffering less painfully from a sense of insecurity and disaster would not have allowed this type of criticism, or the setback of Tunis, to disturb its equanimity. But precisely because Italy was already lacking in national self-confidence, the one seemed the unfortunate complement of the other; and both taken together seemed like a seal of disillusionment set over the beginning to the 'eighties—"lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate." Indeed, these were the years when the diminutive term *Italietta* (little Italy) was coming into use among foreign diplomats as a variant on *Italia*, and men turning from their humiliation abroad saw only disappointment at home. Nothing could have been more characteristic of the new age and of

the cynicism which had begun to twist its vision than the interpretation now offered of the Risorgimento—as though the citizens of this later period found comfort for the pettiness of their present lives in belittling those of their predecessors. The very self-sacrifice and gallantry of the makers of unity was doubted. Had they really been so disinterested, or was the legend of devotion, of an indomitable will hammered on the anvil of circumstances until the anvil itself gave way, merely a legend? Garibaldi's red-shirts and their trappings began to raise a politely sceptical smile, and Garibaldi himself—old, worn out in body and mind, easily persuaded into foolish speeches—seemed a living disproof of the nobility of his own reputation.² The clericals did not fail to exploit the fact that he had at last accepted a pension from the State, and (with somewhat curious charity) changed his title from “the hero of two worlds” into the “hero of two millions”; and the pseudo-intellectuals, the professional thinkers and panderers to public opinion were not slow to follow the prevailing fashion in depreciation. Because the Risorgimento had “cost more in money than in blood” (a fact which no one would at the time have suspected, seeing that it had cost so much in living sacrifice and pain) people began to behave as if it had bequeathed to the nation more in financial liabilities than in national inspiration, and, for lack of belief in themselves, lost faith in belief itself.

This was the real point in the psychological impasse of the day. Had there been a great motivating power in national life, an inspiring national dogma or even a definite spiritual force as there had been in the Risorgimento, the misfortunes of the time would have not mattered. But since 1870 no dynamic or vitalizing current had been felt in politics, and in its absence there had been nothing to make national coexistence more than a suffering form. Instead of giving the nation a new store of vital political ideas, instead of initiating new enterprises that would bring people closer together and make them conscious of a common aim and solidarity, the politicians had continued to rely on a repertory of stock phrases and principles as alien from Italian experience as they were remote from the conditions of the day. So the society of United Italy had

continued—as Francesco de Sanctis had said—to “lack fibre,” remaining as disintegrated and spiritually particularist as it had been before the swift process of union poured its elements into the one and unchanging mould. Regionalism, sectionalism, particularism were still eating the heart of the nation; and the various social groups, far from having acquired a sense of interdependence, were still in a state of isolation, hermetically sealed within the frontiers of their own interests and only vaguely aware of the contour and purpose of general Italian life. Year by year the spiritual power to overcome such isolation had become more deeply atrophied, and the failure to achieve a place within the framework of international society had been symptomatic of a still deeper failure to achieve harmony and integration at home. An international success, a foreign policy of high and daring enterprise would, it is true, have redeemed the lack of vision wounding the country’s spirit; but it was impossible to be strong abroad while suffering from weakness in every aspect of internal existence; and the ill-judged vacillations of Cairoli and Depretis were perhaps only the reflections of the wavering realities with which they had to deal.

They were, moreover, men of their time. And they had gained their political experience in a period when everything to do with Italy had seemed materially limited. This limitation they had come to accept as a natural part of their environment. They judged Italy, indeed, not in terms of her potentialities, which they scarcely imagined; but in terms of her limitations, with which they were thoroughly familiar. Such things as the dormant spiritual resources of the nation, its capacity for sacrifice and endurance, its ability to overcome poverty by hard and unremitting work, they either ignored or forgot, or did not so much as perceive; and absorbed in the evils of the present, they made the standards of the reality they knew the standards of the future and the past. It was a philosophy of crushing pessimism, and as such more harmful than one of merely cynical worldliness. The latter might have produced a healthy reaction; the former, by its negation, seemed a leaden weight oppressing whatever resilience was left in the national temperament. Convinced as Depretis was that nothing more

could be expected of Italy than he himself had extracted, he made the persistent story of her defeat seem a permanent element in her history, transferring the frustration which the country had suffered abroad to frustration in the character of the nation. To make a demand on the people which should rouse them to a conquest of themselves and their difficulties was a policy quite outside the range of his mind. A call to collaboration or to great endeavour would have seemed to him irrational, not only because he did not believe that it would be answered, but because he had really no idea of either what should be the purpose of collaboration or—more remotely—the goal of endeavour. His philosophy, like his policy, was one of living from day to day, and it presupposed acceptance of day-to-day values, in terms of which things might drift on as they pleased and the minimum of effort be asked of politicians and public alike.³ Perhaps in his thoughts he confused this shiftless evasion of responsibility with democracy—as though democracy were incompatible with organization, and “government” an adjective adorning the substantive “democratic”; perhaps it was merely that his own disbelief made him dubious of ideas no less than achievements; in any event, his view that national life had no more to offer than it had given in the last fifteen years made reform or further progress seem illusions.

It was a philosophy difficult even for the intelligent minority to challenge, because it cramped men's minds within the habits and customs of routine, and in doing so weakened their power of initiative. Where many idealists in Italy would have had faith to conquer mountains of national disaster, they felt themselves unable to dominate a series of molehills placed persistently, sordidly, and eternally in the way of any new course which they marked out. To live without any vital programme; to live without plan or sense of direction; to refuse all possibilities and ideals except those listed in the dictionary of tradition; these seemed the conditions imposed by fate and the circumstance of Italy's political system. To break through them some exterior element of courage and hope was needed—an element such as might, for instance, have been supplied by the monarchy had the King been a man of strong and vigorous personality.

But instead the monarchy's chief asset was the Queen. Possessed of beauty, charm, and intellect she seemed a Renaissance princess recalled from the poetry of the past to inspire the unheroic prose of the present.⁴ It was not only the admiration she commanded from poets, artists, and philosophers that made her so distinguished a figure. A certain royalty of spirit, implicit in the very least of her actions, a certain nobility and firmness of will, seem to have touched the popular imagination and won her a spontaneous devotion. Those who remained indifferent to her physical loveliness were conquered by her wit, at once penetrating and gracious, and by the natural acuteness of her mind. Wherever she went she was acclaimed, and wherever she was acclaimed she made converts to the dynasty and the monarchical institutions it represented. Personal magnetism gave her, in short, the art of personal conquest, and the list of her triumphs was expressive of a gift as interesting and unique as the gift of a musician or artist. For the people whose enthusiasm she roused were far from being susceptible to the mere attraction of royalty as such. Both the realism and the scepticism inherent in the Italian temperament made them reserved towards their rulers, ready to assess the value of King and Queen in terms of human worth, but not to pay homage to the title and clothes of tradition. Margherita was for them pre-eminently a personality, and it was as such that they honoured her until the day of her death. Had Umberto possessed but a tenth of her quality, he might have changed the spirit of his time and made his dynasty a historically formative force; but he was unfortunately a prince incapable of grappling with the subtleties of politics and a man unfit to interpret the mood of his generation. To a certain extent this was the fault of his upbringing, for Vittorio-Emanuele had kept his son aloof from affairs of government and given him a training more suitable for a soldier on active service than the head of a modern State.⁵ When he came to the throne, young, sincere, equipped with the very best of intentions, he was familiar chiefly with the needs of the army corps he commanded, and had little vision—perhaps even less understanding—of the rising complications of national life. A conscientious King, anxious to perform his

duties to the letter, he lacked talent for human contacts and was liable to moments of curious and unheeding insensitiveness, when through want of imagination he alienated the sympathies which his virtues actually deserved. Ready to risk his life by visiting the sick in Naples during the cholera epidemic, he gave proof on many occasions of unusual courage and generosity; but though such qualities roused the admiration of his people, there was something that kept him outside their affections. To the day of his death he remained a formal figure whose function in the State was essentially symbolic.

It followed that, however the Queen might shine in the general sphere of national life, little help could be expected of the monarchy in reforming politics or in the more delicate work of restoring the nation's self-confidence. Like Depretis, the King accepted the terms of his environment. And with the monarchy and the politicians thus at a discount the chief source of outside inspiration was literature and art. But here again the pessimism of the age seeking outside aid found only the reflection of itself—a reflection broken up into a variety of forms, yet substantially the same in general temper. The leading figure of the day was undoubtedly Carducci, poet, individualist, and radical—a man as great in spirit as in genius, ardent and sincere. But Carducci was more likely to increase depression than cure it. Italy had been so long the object of his love that he could see nothing in the new age but her betrayal. The kingdom of his vision was so different from the humdrum reality, so infinite in aspiration, so noble in quality, so brilliant in civilization and presence. There was hardly a feature of *Italia unita* which did not outrage his ideal; and there was hardly a feature which he did not magnificently arraign. Perhaps only a man of deep feeling could have used such invective. Politics and politicians, people and Government, all came under the lash of his irony. They were to suffer as he had suffered, were to see the truth as he himself saw it in a blaze of scorn and grief.⁶

Such criticism hurt without stimulating. It was bitterly exaggerated. It was also—like so much idealistic criticism—both incredibly inhuman and beside the point. In effect it meant that because Italy and Italians did not measure up the

standards of a dream they were to be denied judgment in terms of reality, were in fact to be abstractly condemned without regard to the actual problems they had been compelled to face and the actual experience which had been imposed on them by facts. Certainly it would have been difficult to arrive at a comprehensive synthesis of Italian experience; but an attempt to understand its elements would have been more worthy of Carducci's mind than this easy and prejudiced process of denunciation. It was, however, Italy's misfortune to be dependent on materialists in politics and idealists in art and philosophy, lacking the realist harmony of the two which might have given her the courage of her fate. Apart from Carducci, literature hardly boasted an artist with an inspiring sense of values or truly universal vision. In poetry there was Pascoli—appropriately named the "great poet of little things"—an exquisite craftsman, successfully conferring on trifles the sensitive beauty of his own impressions. Apart from Pascoli, there were the popular poets of the day, Severino Ferrari and Panzacchi, both of them artists content to be charming rather than deep, more interested in the incidents of everyday life than in the background and thought which informed them. In prose there was, it is true, Verga, a realist determined with savage and relentless intensity to describe the existence of the Sicilian peasants among whom he lived. In Verga, at least, Italy had a spirit ready to look on realities and not be shaken; a mind willing to observe, yet not sophisticate, facts. In his writings, with their extraordinary force, something like humanity itself seemed to re-enter the stage of public life, as though from his pages there were issuing a dark multitude of common men hurrying to batter at the intellectualist preoccupations of the age. And yet this humanity which Verga depicted—terrible in its misery, in its primitive character and its passionate, headlong disaster—was like a variation on the bitterness of Carducci. It produced, not so much desire for a new and better life, as disgust with life in general. And, if Verga were left aside, the work of such minor writers as de Roberto and Rovetta was hardly more reassuring. More popular and general in style, it still contained a gloomy picture of the evils liable to characterize political life, evils anatomized

and dissected in the brilliant writings of Francesco de Sanctis, literary critic, historian and philosopher.

Was this pessimism really deserved? Had Italy really achieved so little? Had her progress been so small? Actually the judgment was extraordinarily lacking in historical perspective. The kingdom had been fully in existence for only fifteen years, and in those years it had accomplished a gigantic work of assimilation and construction. From being a geographical expression it had been metamorphosed into a State and its inhabitants, so diverse in experience and character, brought within the form of a nation. Where a few decades before there had existed (in the words of a French critic) only "the land of the dead" there now existed a modern political entity, provided—perhaps weakly and defectively, but still provided—with the most essential of modern political requirements. At one stride the country had emerged from the tomb of fifteen centuries, had advanced to a place among the Powers of Europe, and now stood, free, united and independent, on the threshold of a European future. The achievement was more than phenomenal. It was prodigious. Handicapped by every possible material obstacle, the nation had passed through economic ordeals which would have tested the stability of an England, a France or an Austria. It had, untrained and inexperienced, confronted the gravest of international and diplomatic problems; it had, in short, assumed—and assumed without ruin—the responsibilities of a nineteenth-century power when its economics and resources were still fundamentally those of a seventeenth-century land. Regarded in this way, the failures that so completely obscured the sight of intellectuals and politicians were "motes to trouble the mind's eye"; factors which had been allowed to assume an importance out of all proportion to their true significance. Actually the philosophers need only have stepped outside their mental conventions for a moment to perceive that in terms of history their despondency was premature and the facts which caused it by no means irremediable. But such detachment of vision demanded serenity and disinterest; and serenity and disinterest were almost impossible to achieve in years when the pain of disillusionment was incessant, when accumulated experience

seemed only accumulated misfortune, and pride and hope were felt chiefly as the outposts to despair.

Still, granted the supreme difficulty of seeing Italy's progress in relation to the long cycle of her past, present and future, a little practical observation and patient study of facts would have shown that even within the framework of the present there had been some solid accomplishment. The figures for trade and commerce, the statistics of exports and imports, the development of industry and the rapid growth of communications all revealed a period of intense work. While politicians and thinkers had been feverishly debating on legislation and diplomacy, people of all classes had been quietly going about their business, widening the scope of national activity and mastering the details of new technical and commercial advance. For at heart the energies of the nation were essentially sound; where scope existed for practical application, and steady, laborious effort, the people could not be accused of lethargy; and nothing could have proved it more clearly than the new and accelerated rhythm of economic life. In 1865 the kingdom had possessed only 4,200 kilometres of railroad; in 1885 it possessed 10,000. In 1871, moreover, the Fréjus tunnel through the Alps was opened, and in 1882 the St. Gotthard.⁷ It is true that railway construction in these years had been made more often than not to subserve private rather than public interest; true that the question of routes and administration had given rise to some of the worst instances of wire-pulling in parliamentary history; yet the fact of greater intercommunication remained, and with it the impetus it had given business and trade. And this was evident, too, in the development of the mercantile marine and the new routes over which it had expanded. While the steamship tonnage had been only ten thousand in 1862, it was a million in 1877, and though it suffered a relative decline after this, the all-round figures remained satisfactory. Companies such as the Rubattino of Genoa and the Florio of Palermo made the Italian flag well known in Mediterranean trade, and by 1881 they had acquired sufficient international interest to amalgamate as the famous *Compagnia di Navigazione Generale Italiana*.

Moreover, this intercourse with the outside world had been

accompanied by a new development of industry. Where up to the late 'seventies Italy had been not only an essentially agricultural country, but almost an exclusively agricultural one, the idea of industrialism spread rapidly towards the beginning of the 'eighties; and while Milan began to be known for its silk, Biella became gradually a wool-spinning centre. Between 1879 and 1883 the new demands of industry made themselves so felt that the import of coal was doubled, that of iron and steel multiplied by twelve. The average of wealth increased from 1,331 lire per head in 1872-74 to 1,646 in 1875-79, and between 1872 and 1882 the deposits in the savings banks rose from half a milliard to a milliard.⁸ Thrifty, energetic, indomitably hard-working, the bourgeoisie was in fact inch by inch conquering the poverty of its environment, and, while suffering acutely from a sense of failure in political life, the nation was laying the foundations for an improved economic future.

Given such facts, it may seem curious that they should have remained so completely outside the texture of national thought. If the pessimism of the day required denial, here surely, it might have been imagined, was a practical response, a direct material contradiction of the lamentations and gloomy forebodings which seemed to fill the Italian air. But in the first place the general improvement had done little to alleviate the condition of the mass of Italians. In the second place there were very few people who realized the progress indicated, and still fewer who interested themselves in statistics and economics. Considered from the standpoint of the average citizen the striking feature in his changing environment was simply the effort and struggle it involved. There was no general spiritual impulse behind the material advance. It represented a cautious, private process of building up an edifice of which one knew, not the plan or dimensions, but simply the particular section of work allotted to oneself. Men mixed the ingredients for their bricks, placed them firmly and carefully in alignment, and hardly thought of the general function they might possibly and unconsciously be fulfilling. Besides, the influence of the Government and of public institutions appeared to the ordinary man rather as an incubus on progress than a stimulus to it. Predominantly aware of the vices in the

political system, they tended inevitably to judge it predominantly in terms of them; and if they related the new forces of economic development to the forms of national evolution, they did so with the feeling that the first was somehow taking place despite the second. "Eppur si muove!" The words might have been written to give the accent in the new rhythm which trade and economics were composing—an accent on difficulties and obstruction, not on harmonious co-ordination, and free, unimpeded movement.

Apart from this, moreover, such material advance provided no answer to the spiritual unrest of the day. The Italians, least of all peoples in Europe, could endure to live by bread alone. The values of their civilization, no less than the inspiration of their past, had always been cultural, intellectual, artistic—in short, the negation of a mechanized, industrialized future. Was the genius that had triumphed in sculpture and painting, in music and poetry, to be nourished on trade returns and increased shipping tonnage? Were Italy's creative gifts to be buried under the grey atoms of a trivial and petty political existence? The philosophy of Depretis might be the official one of the age; but side by side with it there existed another, explicit in the lamentations of Carducci, implicit in the self-reproaches, in the over-sensitive self-questioning of the men who criticized themselves, parliamentary government, and the general formula of national existence. These men represented the heaven in the mass of the new Italy—the Italy that, like Hamlet, found the uses of her world flat, stale and unprofitable, and urged on by her own spiritual quality, demanded to know if they were always to remain so: if, in short, she had been resurrected from a tomb of fifteen centuries merely in order to enjoy some improvement in business and trade. Since 1870 the nation had felt something like a process of spiritual starvation; starvation not in artistic production, since Carducci and Verdi had been steadily adding to their fame; but starvation in means of self-expression and in general use of creative power. Instead of finding her political vocation, Italy seemed to have embarked on a course carrying her further and further away from it; and the discouragement of the new generation was perhaps a natural reaction to the distance they observed,

not only between ideal and fact, but between just aspiration and the possibility of practical realization. Their feeling was, after all, not very unusual in character. In some respects it might have compared with the feeling existing among Spanish intellectuals in 1914, as summed up for instance in the words of Ortega y Gasset, when he expressed the grief of his generation at the sight of what their elders had done with Spain. "Our generation . . . has never negotiated with the topics of patriotism, and when it hears the word Spain it does not think of Caldéron and Lepanto, it does not remember the victories of the Cross, it does not call forth the vision of a blue sky, and under it a splendour—it merely feels, and that which it feels is grief. . . . Official Spain consists, as it were, in ghostly parties upholding ghosts of ideas which, backed by the shadow of newspapers, keep going Cabinets of hallucination . . ." With the slightest alteration of historical allusions no better analysis could be given of the state of mind at which Italians had arrived.⁹

An important result of this state of mind showed itself in the next period. From about 1882 on it appeared as a wish to emerge from isolation and to form alliances which should serve as precautions against a renewal of the Tunis humiliation.¹⁰ For the humiliation of Tunis had not ended with the occupancy of the Regency by France. The French Government, Parliament, and Press added to the force of the blow by a display of jubilation. And where the episode in itself might only have hurt Italian self-esteem, the flaunting of it exasperated public feeling to the last degree. Restless, irritated, even that section of the people usually indifferent to the impact of foreign events demanded some satisfaction, or an opportunity to retrieve their prestige. Fuel was added to the fire of their resentment by an episode which occurred shortly after in the south of France. On the 17th June, while some French regiments which had just returned from Tunis were marching through the streets of Marseilles, whistles were heard amid the acclamations of the crowd; and since they were, rightly or wrongly, attributed to a group of Italian bystanders, the crowd began an attack on the Italian colony of the port. For three days there was a veritable hunt for

Italian workmen (considered among other things to have undercut French wages), and in the end out of some 50,000 Italians, several were killed and wounded.¹¹

Inevitably the news provoked demonstrations in Italy, especially at Turin, Milan, and Genoa. Questions were asked in Parliament, and amongst the bitter speeches made against France, one by Bovio contained a perfect charter of the wrongs inflicted on Italy by her neighbour since Mentana.¹² It was in vain that Mancini, the new Foreign Minister in Depretis's Cabinet, pleaded for moderation and the maintenance of good relations. The tension in the air was too great, and any slackening of it was precluded by the emergence of a new trend in popular thought, a trend towards an alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Such an alliance had been advocated in the *Rassegna Settimanale* by Sonnino as early as May, a few weeks after the Treaty of Bardo. In a remarkable article he had shown how, so long as Italy remained without allies, she could hope for nothing but rebuffs in international affairs.¹³ "Isolation," he said, summing up the point of his argument, "means for us annihilation." And he followed up the project of an alliance with the Central Powers by a detached analysis of the advantages that might be expected from it. The chief obstacle was, he admitted, *Italia Irredenta* and the intense feeling with which this question was regarded by Italians. But he thought this might be overcome if it was considered that possession of Trieste was really necessary to Austria, and had in any case a mixed population; so far as Trento was concerned, although the region was definitely Italian, Italy's interest in acquiring it would (he thought) be small in comparison with the interests represented by the acquisition of Austria's friendship. "This friendship represents for us the free disposition of all our forces on land and sea: it represents . . . the authority of our word in the European concert. . . . Friendship with Austria is, for us, an indispensable condition for a conclusive and effective policy . . . let us cultivate it with every care . . ." And his view was shortly afterwards supported by both Cadorna and Luzzatti, who emphasized the necessity of an alliance with the Central European Powers; while Marselli, a Deputy of the Centre, pointed out that the

mutual conflict of interests between France and Italy made a Franco-Italian friendship almost impossible.¹⁴

These arguments, though in harmony with the growing body of public opinion, were far from being acceptable to Depretis and his Ministers. On this issue, as on so many others, there was in fact a complete gulf between the attitude of the Government and that of the people it was supposed to represent; for Depretis, so far from realizing the intense bitterness felt regarding the Tunisian affair, was anxious only to draw a veil over the whole episode and re-establish normal and even cordial Franco-Italian relations. Many considerations urged him on to this policy—not least his own philosophy and the philosophy generally accepted by his associates. A policy of friendship with France was indeed no mere matter of expediency or political convenience to them. It was a tangible affirmation of the Liberalism in which they believed, an expression of free intellectual conviction no less than of natural racial sympathy. For they regarded the principles of French radicalism with hardly less enthusiasm than the French themselves, and they felt for French civilization all the love and admiration of men who had been steeped in its spirit. Many of them were moreover theorists only half converted to monarchical institutions, and where the French Republic appeared as the embodiment of the dreams they had been compelled to renounce the “autocratic empires” of Germany and Austria seemed to threaten an invasion of the reactionary and authoritarian ideal against which they had persistently fought.¹⁵ Nor, apart from these considerations, were they blind to the economic and material interests represented by friendship with France. In an inspired article, which seemed almost a direct rebuke of the new anti-French tendencies, the *Popolo Romano* reminded the public that France was Italy’s great market—a market which represented at least 800,000 lire a year, and the loss of which would cause the gravest injury to the country’s trade.¹⁶

It was not an argument that soothed popular irritation. And while Depretis and his adherents strove manfully to avoid any reorientation of policy, ignoring with delicate skill the real direction of national feeling, circumstances and the

pressure of an angry, disappointed people began spontaneously to enforce their will. For the situation was now complicated by a recrudescence of the dispute with the Papacy. Relations with the Vatican had in fact been strained for some time. The new Pope had shown himself hardly less amenable to conciliation than Pius IX, and as early as 3rd April, 1879, had seized an occasion to remark that temporal power was indispensable to the Holy See for the free exercise of its spiritual dominion. Later, angered by a Bill regarding the celebration of religious and civil marriage, he had launched a violent protest against a Government "inspired by a wish to bring new tribulations on the Church and spread perversion among the Italian people."¹⁷ Considering the sensitiveness of popular feelings, attacks of this kind (linked with others still more derogatory to Italy's dignity) appeared as the last and crowning insults of fortune—insults which might be temporarily ignored while larger issues filled the stage, but which, inopportunately resurrected at a moment of severe psychological strain, almost inevitably produced an explosion. It came about in connection with the transference of the remains of Pius IX to the Church of San Lorenzo, where in his last will he had desired to be buried. During the night of July 12th–13th, while the imposing funeral procession was bearing the body from the Basilica of San Pietro, certain advocates of the Pope's temporary rule raised a cry of "Viva il Papa-Re!" (Long live the Pope-King). And the Liberal and Radical elements in the crowd, exasperated to the last degree, retaliated with blows. In the ensuing scuffle (which the police contingent was wholly inadequate to control) imprecations on the Papacy were supported by attempts to stop the procession, and finally even threats to consign the corpse to the Tiber.¹⁸

The incident was of course deplorable. But the Radicals had as it were tasted blood, and so far from repenting of their misdeeds proceeded to organize a strong movement for the abolition of the Law of Guarantees. Agitation was carried on with all the zest of feeling too long held in check. Epithets of a most disrespectful nature were joyously hurled against the Papacy, the Church, and Pius IX in turn, and the tumult soon reached proportions where the new Pope's more irreconcilable

advisers seriously urged him to leave Italy and go into voluntary exile abroad. Correspondence on the subject was actually opened between the Vatican and the Emperor of Austria,¹⁹ and Leo XIII strengthened his position by a protest addressed to the Powers of Europe—a protest in which he declared the Italian Government incapable of guaranteeing either the rights of religion or the safety and spiritual independence of the Pope.

The protest put Depretis and his Cabinet in a most embarrassing and even alarming position. Considering the temper of popular feeling, it would have been dangerous to suppress the Radicals. On the other hand, to let matters drift was to court disaster in international relations, and ultimately the possibility of armed intervention on the part of any of the three Powers most interested in securing the Pope's support—France, Germany, Austria. In short, the controversy appeared as yet another illustration of the (already familiar) evils of isolation, and it showed pointedly that the policy of avoiding alliances was actually a policy of avoiding decision and clarity of mind. So long as Mancini spoke vaguely of desiring to maintain equally friendly relations with all, circular letters to the sovereigns of Europe refusing any responsibility for the Radicals' activities against the Pope were liable to be in the nature of distress rockets, brilliantly illumining the plight of those who sent them off, but singularly failing to attract any aid from outside. And indeed, Mancini himself, reluctant as he was to take a definite stand, began to see that it could no longer be postponed. Turning from the elusive subtleties of Depretis in search of firmer counsels, he found at his elbow a man who had both expert knowledge of the problem and a determined view of the way it should be settled. It was this man who gradually but surely shaped his purpose.

Baron Blanc, as the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, had had ample opportunity of studying the lie of the land, and had for years been delicately working to see his own conception of foreign policy prevail over that of the Government. Mancini's hesitation gave him his opportunity. While privately persuading the minister that, since

Italy could not afford three potentially hostile neighbours, her best strategy was to ally herself with two of them, he took care that his advice should receive a certain popular reflection by means of a series of inspired articles in the prominent journal *Il Diritto*, whose editor was induced to carry on a miniature publicity campaign in favour of the Central Powers. Nor were his efforts slow in meeting with Austrian recognition. Vienna had no sooner observed that the wind in Rome was changing direction than the Viennese Press announced blandly and officiously that the King of Italy was to visit the Emperor Franz-Joseph within the next few months. In reality an invitation to Vienna had neither been issued nor accepted; but the Press reports were a *ballon d'essai* discreetly let slip by the Austrian Government to observe if this time the Italians really meant to come to terms.²⁰

For actually, Blanc's idea of an alliance with Germany and Austria was not new. It had been advocated by a certain section of the Left ever since the opening phases of the Tunis imbroglio. As far back as August 1880 Cialdini and Count Maffei had prevailed on Cairoli to open *pourparlers* with Germany, and for approximately four months the question of an alliance had been discussed in the German and Italian Press.²¹ Nothing, however, had come of these discussions because Depretis was—as usual—irreconcilably opposed to any agreement which might seem directed against the French.²² And later talks with Vienna (undertaken by Crispi in January 1881 after winning Cairoli's permission) had broken down through the same obstacle.²³ Despite the favourable reception given to an Italian secret agent by the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, neither Depretis nor Cairoli had felt moved to follow up the matter with official negotiations, partly because both men were still obstinately optimistic about Tunis, partly because they were unwilling to renounce their Irredentist aspirations, and most of all because they were still preoccupied with the idea of a French *entente*.²⁴ This had been their attitude (as we have seen) even after the Regency had been occupied, when the idea of an Austro-German understanding had really become almost popular with public and Parliament. It was a solution that Depretis quite simply

did not like; and it was chiefly the spectre of a general fracas over the restoration of the Temporal Power that now in August 1881 induced him with Mancini to listen to the schemes expounded by Blanc.

Even at this moment, however, the idea of a royal visit to Franz-Joseph did not rouse enthusiasm in Depretis's Ministry. Questioning the Italian ambassador in Vienna (Count di Robilant), Mancini was relieved to hear it branded in his opinion as a false and over-hasty move;²⁵ and he would have allowed the whole matter to drop if a meeting between the Emperors of Russia, Germany, and Austria at Danzig had not changed the complexion of the European situation. The meeting had in fact no sooner taken place than the Austrian Press began to deprecate the idea of an alliance with Italy, adding that Italy's adherence to the Central European bloc would under the new circumstances be of little value. The ruse was enough to stampede Mancini from his calm and send him, anxious, nervous, uncertain of his position, to an interview with Baron Blanc. The royal visit was rapidly decided on for 27th October; and on that date Umberto, accompanied by the Queen, Depretis, and Mancini, arrived in Vienna.

Their stay, from a general point of view, was an unqualified success—perhaps the more so as political questions were not discussed in the course of it. For Haymerlé, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, had died unexpectedly a short while before, and there had not been time to appoint his successor. Directed primarily towards the establishment of goodwill and personal understanding, the interchange of conversations proceeded with profit to all. Margherita aroused the admiration which she merited, and Umberto was honoured by being made colonel of an Austrian regiment. It was a distinction which a more sensitive or a more diplomatic man would have avoided. But Umberto had little intuition where his people's feelings were concerned and little skill in the niceties of political calculation. He did not reflect that in putting on an Austrian uniform he was putting on something which most of his subjects regarded as a symbol of national shame. Actually, the least chauvinistic of Italians associated it not merely with the Wars of Independence, but with the

cruelty and oppression which had preceded them. It evoked the memory of Gonfaleri, condemned to waste a brilliant life in the gloom of solitary confinement; it recalled the sufferings of Silvio Pellico, dragged from prison to prison to be released only after years of captivity; it recalled, in short, the long series of Italian lives broken by exile, by physical torture, or the more subtle arts of mental persecution. Accordingly, the incident cast a gloom over what would otherwise have been a triumph for the monarchy and the Government. The public was pleased by the success of the royal visit; it appreciated the reflected glory of the Viennese festivities and their enhancement of Italy's prestige; but it felt coldly towards the King and mistrustful towards the politicians who had accompanied him. The Irredentists and the Radicals seized the occasion to revive their agitation and to plaster the walls of Rome with posters inquiring if the House of Savoy were still Italian. Cries of "Down with the Austrian colonel!" were heard at political meetings,²⁶ and a new current of unpopularity and suspicion began to focus on the Ministry and its head.

Perhaps for these reasons—perhaps chiefly because of his habitual inertia—Depretis did not follow up the visit by any further diplomatic discussions. His Cabinet appeared to think that in accepting Franz-Joseph's invitation they had done all that could be expected and might settle down to wait on events. These were not long in coming. On 14th November, 1881, a new Government was formed in France with Gambetta at its head, and to the Conservatives of Europe Gambetta appeared to typify all that was restless and dynamic in the radicalism of the day. Germany—which might have been supposed to see in him the incarnation of *revanche*—was on the whole undisturbed. Bismarck was too well informed regarding the condition of the French army to feel anxiety over Franco-German relations. But the effect on the internal situation in Italy was important.²⁷ The Radical-Republican section of the Left felt themselves intangibly but morally encouraged, while the Conservatives and the Liberal adherents of the monarchy felt correspondingly (if vaguely) alarmed. And this alarm was skilfully exploited by Bismarck, who had reasons of his own for wishing not only to intimidate Italy

into seeking an Austro-German alliance, but forcing her to do so in a manner as advantageous to himself as possible.

Up to the present he had maintained a sceptical attitude towards Italian negotiations with Vienna. He had too often seen Italy make overtures to the Central Powers, only to abandon them when the temporary crisis in her relations with France was past. Since 1877, he told Saint-Vallier (the French ambassador), he had lost all faith in the Italians; and shortly after, he added that he doubted if they would *ever* actually take the field against the French.²⁸ Besides, he was too much of a realist not to consider that the continual instability of government in Italy made it doubtful if any Ministry would be able to live up to the obligations of an Austro-German alliance.²⁹ Still, the change in the situation in Italy created by Gambetta's rise now made it seem that pressure on Rome might produce firmer results. And accordingly, in a speech to the Reichstag on 29th November he did not fail to exhibit touching concern for the future both of the Italian State and the House of Savoy. "The idea of a republic haunts many Italian minds . . . can you give a guarantee for the future of the country, especially if God does not preserve the dynasty, which depends on only a few persons? . . . Has not the centre of gravity shifted from one Ministry to another, more and more to the Left, so that now it cannot slide further to the Left without falling into Republican territory?"

Following on this the Berlin newspaper, the *Post*, published a series of inspired articles on the question of the Pope's position in Rome, gravely sympathizing with the Holy Father's difficulties, and suggesting that he should solve them either by voluntary exile or more vigorous efforts at reconciliation with Depretis's Government.³⁰ These were tactics that effectually produced consternation both in the Quirinal and the Camera dei Deputati. Within a few days a vigorous debate took place on foreign affairs, and speaker after speaker rose to protest against the continuance of a policy of isolation; Sonnino and Minghetti definitely asked for a loyal and resolute entry into the sphere of Austro-German relations;³¹ the Deputy Arbib—voicing the ideas of many—pointed out that a policy of endeavouring to maintain equally friendly relations

with all usually ended in a failure to maintain friendly relations with any. On the whole there was no mistaking the general current of sympathy in favour of concluding an alliance with the Central Powers; and though Mancini as late as the 10th January, 1882, adopted a proud and independent attitude in reply to Bismarck's policy,³² a definite exchange of ideas was soon begun between the new Austrian minister, Count Kalnoky, and the Italian ambassador at Vienna. The negotiations were long and difficult, especially when it came to the inclusion of Germany; but at last on the 20th May, 1882, the famous Triple Alliance was signed.

It was an essentially defensive agreement, and one conservative in tone. Indeed, the preamble stated that the rulers of Austria, Germany, and Italy, "animated by a desire to increase the guarantee of peace, to strengthen the monarchical principle and thereby to assure the unimpaired maintenance of the social and political order in their respective states, have agreed to conclude a treaty which by its essentially conservative and defensive nature pursues only the aim of forestalling the dangers which might threaten the security of their states and the peace of Europe."³³ The eight Articles which followed were in accordance with the aim thus set forth. In general terms the three nations agreed mutually to preserve peace and friendship, and not to enter into any alliance or engagement which might be directed against any one of them. Italy and Germany respectively guaranteed one another against any unprovoked and aggressive attack by France; and by Article Three, all three nations assured one another military support in case one of them should, through no fault of its own, be attacked by two or more Powers. Article Four stated that should any Great Power not a signatory of the treaty so menace the safety of one of the contracting parties as to constrain it to go to war, the other two members of the Alliance should observe benevolent neutrality towards their ally. Article Seven provided that the agreement should remain in force five years.³⁴

The main gains to Italy were (somewhat dubiously) the promise of support in case of an attack by France and (more definitely) the implicit guarantee given by the wording of the

Treaty against a restoration of the Temporal Power. Actually the danger of an attack by France was negligible as every Italian knew, and Italy did not need reassuring on the point. But it was vital and important to have the Italian Kingdom guaranteed—however indirectly—in its possession of Rome. To have disposed of the haunting fear of a resuscitation of the papal dominion was much. Apart from this, the Alliance put an end to the worst evils of isolation; it brought Italy within the orbit of the Great Powers; and it gratified the wish generally felt to offset the humiliation of Tunis by some stroke of positive policy—preferably one that would annoy France. On the whole, therefore, it might easily have been regarded as a success, if its encouraging features had not been rapidly obscured both by outside events and the spirit in which Bismarck chose to interpret it. Bismarck indeed, with his customary disregard for Italian susceptibilities, contrived to remove any psychological or human meaning the agreement might have had for Italy. Germany and Austria, he remarked brusquely, counted little on the forces of Italy and did not care about her help; it would be enough if they secured her neutrality in order to release Austrian forces from guarding the Austro-Italian frontier. "I should be satisfied if one Italian corporal with the Italian flag and a drummer at his side should take the field on the Western front (against France) and not on the Eastern front (against Austria)."³⁵ In short, the Alliance, so far from being an association of equal partners in a common enterprise, was to be an alliance between two powerful empires who were, for reasons of convenience, prepared to offer Italy the rôle of poor relation. If nothing else had occurred to shake the agreement, this spirit would from the outset have harmed it; but in point of fact there were other and more serious causes of disharmony—factors as a result of which the Alliance, instead of appearing as a good end to a number of unfortunate mistakes, appeared chiefly as an encumbrance on a free and honourable future.

The chief reason for the resentment which began to surround it in Italy was an episode involving a young Triestino named Oberdan. Oberdan, still in his early twenties, fanatically patriotic and obsessed by Irredentist ideals, dreamt only of a

day when Trieste and Trento should rise against Austrian rule and win their freedom under an Italian flag.³⁶ In accordance with this dream, his main aim was to set an impassable, an eternal, barrier between Italy and Austria. "The cause of Trieste," he said, "has need of the blood of a martyr," and in September 1882 he went—foreseeing that he must pay for it with his life—to assassinate the Emperor Franz-Joseph. His attempt failed. He was first imprisoned, and then sentenced to death on the gallows. The news aroused widespread interest. The Emperor of Austria received petitions for mercy from a variety of sources, and from Frenchmen and Victor Hugo not least. But since Oberdan himself refused to sign any request for pardon he met his death in December, mounting the scaffold with undaunted courage and the cry, "Evviva Italia, Evviva Trieste libera!"³⁷

The episode shook Italy to its foundations, and for the sake of the patriotic motive the murderous intent was forgotten. Carducci, carried away by indignant pity, referred to Franz-Joseph as the "Emperor of the Hanged."³⁸ Cavallotti remarked that not only the body of Oberdan swung from the gallows, but the honour of Italy. In short, there were demonstrations and an expression of popular feeling greater than had been known for decades. Depretis's efforts diplomatically to repress the disturbance failed to soothe either Italian or Austrian feelings,³⁹ and the clashes which took place between police and public heightened if anything the general resentment.

Such a beginning augured ill for the future of the Alliance. It cracked the base before the consolidating cement had had time to settle. Austria hereafter regarded her ally with definite mistrust, and Italy wished herself out of a diplomatic association that now appeared diplomatic bondage. The development was the more unfortunate because precisely at this moment Italy was brought face to face with the issue of colonialism and the problem of African expansion. The Tunisian question had not belonged to this category. It had involved certain national interests and a certain number of Italian settlers, but it had not been thought of in terms of territorial conquest or national sovereignty. The Italians of the period were not interested in the idea of colonial enterprise, and the idea of

African possession *a priori* left their imagination for the most part unstirred. While the wave of imperialism which was sweeping Europe had already passed over England and France, Italy had remained detached, indifferent to the new direction of European thought, and intellectually critical of its principles.

This attitude was not merely a negative one, born of racial conservatism or lack of genius for oversea activity. There were very few chapters in Italy's history that blazed more brilliantly than the history of her oversea enterprise. Perhaps no country in the Middle Ages had felt more strongly the magic of the Orient, or done more to bring Eastern thought and Eastern civilization—as well as luxury—within the sphere of Western Europe. The Florentine merchants in Constantinople, seeking for Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici the glories of Byzantine art as well as the profits of Levantine commerce; the Venetian and Genoese and Neapolitan traders venturing obstinately into unknown lands and trafficking audaciously with strange people in search of new wares; the long series of Italian travellers, eager, inquisitive, vividly intelligent, passing from the Holy Land to Persia, from Persia to China—all these testified to the adventurous temper of the race. Indeed, the Renaissance had been almost as sensitive to the fascination of uncharted seas as to the fascination of unknown ideas. The thrill of intellectual discovery—the existence of new worlds in thought, and physical fact—these had been interrelated and complementary things. While Copernicus and Galileo investigated the heavens, Columbus discovered America. His enterprise was of course financed by a foreign Power and accomplished exclusively in its service: and the fact was no accident. Italian discoveries received more support and encouragement from the powerful, unified monarchies of England and Spain than from their own small and particularist states. Yet the little Republic of Venice had “held the gorgeous East in fee,” had dominated the Dalmatian coast, and, proudly rivalling Genoa, had founded colonies on the Black Sea in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁴⁰ Daring islands of European trade in a flood of Asiatic barbarism, these miniature towns of Caffa and Soldaja (to mention only two) had shut themselves

up within their encircling walls, rallied to their Italian garrison and flown the standard of Saint Mark and of Genoa till the mother-cities were too crushed by domestic disasters to maintain their power abroad. If, in short, the Italian peninsula with its dissident elements had never undertaken the imperial responsibilities, the tremendous constructive work involved in the Spanish, the French, the Dutch, and the English Empires, its colonial tradition was still a proud one and its list of discoveries among the most honourable in Europe.

Nor was the spirit it represented entirely dead in the Italy of the nineteenth century. Despite the torpor of the nation, Italian travellers and explorers had been active in a variety of unknown lands, penetrating Borneo, exploring New Guinea, stubbornly traversing the unknown regions of Africa.⁴¹ The naturalist D'Albertis had ascended the lower regions of the Fly River and laid the basis for scientific knowledge of Papua; Beccari, botanist and explorer, had been the first to pass through the Bintulu and Regiang districts of Sarawak; Antinori (already a traveller in Syria and Anatolia) had made an important contribution to scientific knowledge of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and the Blue Nile region. And he had later extended his activities to Tunisia and Abyssinia, and died as one of the King of Shoa's few European friends. There had, too, been Pellegrino Matteucci, who had accomplished the feat of crossing Africa from Khartoum through Dar-fur, Bornu, and Kano, descending the course of the Niger as far as Akassa and leaving his name to mark one of the most difficult of European routes. Chairini, Giuletti, Bianchi, and Porro had been killed while performing outstanding work; and Cecchi, like a figure from the *Arabian Nights*, had spent five fantastic years as the prisoner of the Queen of Gherra. To these names might have been added those of Camperio and Casati (men equally keen and devoted) and that of Gessi, Gordon's daring second-in-command to whom belonged the honour of having discovered one of the branches of the Nile. Nor had the activities of these men been without scientific encouragement: the Italian Geographical Society, founded in 1867, the African Society at Naples, and the Society for Geographical and Commercial Exploration at Milan showed that Italian scientific

associations at least were aware of the potentialities of the African continent.

But the views of this minority were too fundamentally in conflict with conditions at home to obtain popular support. How could a people scarcely emerged from centuries of poverty, neglect, and disunion feel attracted by colonial adventures? And apart from this, how were they to reconcile the premises of colonialism with the political ideology in which they firmly and uncompromisingly believed? For Cairoli's dream of a policy of clean hands—his support of the principle of non-intervention, neutrality, and peace—had possessed a national and philosophical background. It had been directly derived from the tradition of the *Risorgimento* period, and this tradition still determined the great majority of Italians' views. Both in the 'eighties and 'nineties Italians thought in terms of the ideology which had inspired the subject peoples of Europe to rise against their masters in the first half of the nineteenth century, and were unaware that this ideology might seem an anachronism in a world where nations were becoming empires and Liberal principles yielding to imperialist ambitions. For the thinking public the theories of Romagnosi were still valid—those theories according to which nationality should enjoy the same rights as individuality, and nationalism be regarded as a form of national egoism.⁴² Had not Garibaldi championed the liberty of peoples in America and Europe, and the kingdom of Italy been founded in the name of national freedom and the right of self-determination? They were formulae, old-fashioned in tone but tested in the wars of national independence, beliefs that were a habit of mind among a people isolated by tradition and circumstance from new trends in the formation of European ideas.

Some fatality—or inner logic of history—decreed that these beliefs should be almost perfectly embodied in Mancini, and that precisely Mancini should be the minister called on to deal with the beginnings of Italian colonialism. Mancini was a very different type from Cairoli—intelligent, subtle, complex; resuming in one personality the talents of three professions, at once scientist, lawyer, and politician.⁴³ It was as a scientist that he shone; and indeed his philosophical temper,

his faith in theory, and his general integrity of mind made him feel politics as a *via crucis*, a road paved with disillusionments and troubles and regret for time wasted in transitory things. He aspired indeed to serve his country, but to serve it in the sphere of law and culture, to spread the science of jurisprudence, and act, however academically, as the protector of the weak against violence and injustice. . . . He understood international affairs as a great opportunity for the enactment of international principles; and he interpreted "internationalism" as meaning, (not the happy supremacy of his own nation), but some system in which the principle of nationality should have the strength of law, and peace, civilization, and liberty form the keystones of a new era.⁴⁴ Put in a position to carry out foreign policy, he imagined that the mentality which had governed his actions as a university professor was the right mentality for intercourse with the Powers of Europe; and in dealing with other diplomats he preserved—like a certain President of the United States—the lofty tone and generous idealism which drew students to his lectures in Rome.

It followed in this period that his policy was a practical failure. Uncertain in direction, easily influenced, and determined fundamentally by a wish to establish good relations with all, it succeeded neither in securing Italy's advantage nor the trust of other nations. The Central Powers observed coldly that after concluding the Alliance Mancini not only still wished to be the friend of France, but to avoid giving her cause for offence. France observed with bitterness that Italy had joined the bloc of her enemies, and was still popularly bent on regarding Tunis as a national wrong and a piece of international injustice. When Mancini had need of positive support, Bismarck and Kalnoky held aloof; when he would have liked the benevolent neutrality of France, France remained implicitly hostile. In short, the policy of reconciliation with all left Italy, despite the burden of her new alliance, still without diplomatic reinforcement for an active rôle in the Mediterranean and in Africa. Sonnino indicated the very crux of the situation when he said in 1885: "We want a clear and definite foreign policy, a policy with precise objectives capable of winning the trust

of others and securing firm and reliable friendships. And this has never resulted, and never will result, from the policy of Mancini, which recalls the bat of the fable.⁴⁵

'Je suis oiseau, voyez mes ailes.
Je suis souris, vivent les rats!' "

The first colonial issue with which Mancini was confronted had to do with Egypt. The internal confusion of Egyptian government, the rising power of the nationalist party under Arabi Pasha, had by June 1882 so harassed French and English interests as to induce them to arrange for a European conference at Constantinople in order to discuss what steps should be taken to restore order. While the conference diplomatically deliberated, while it formulated a principle of non-intervention in dignified and unexceptionable terms, a rising against foreigners occurred at Alexandria, several Europeans were massacred, and Arabi Pasha began to fortify the city. On the 11th of July an English squadron (England's position had received special recognition from the conference) bombarded the port; and as France indicated that she did not wish to intervene the Gladstone-Granville Government invited Italy to co-operate in military action and the restoration of peace.⁴⁶ The invitation represented a unique opportunity. England, it was clear, would hardly be satisfied with suppressing Arabi Pasha. When his insurrection had been put down there would be the future of Egypt to settle and (presumably) the question of rewarding whatever collaboration and help England had received. Apart from such material advantage, moreover, participation in the enterprise would inevitably mean a gain in reputation and status. And considering how profoundly the burden of isolation had weighed on Italy, this in itself would have been a vital point. Among the advocates of intervention, Minghetti would have been satisfied with such a "moral" gain alone; while Crispi, remembering how much the little state of Piedmont had achieved by co-operating in the Crimean War, hoped for more.⁴⁷

But Mancini refused the invitation; and his refusal was strictly in accord with the main body of public opinion. A vast number of Italians felt themselves bound to Egypt by

peculiar ties of sympathy. It was only a decade or so since the Khedive had specially commissioned Verdi to write *Aida*; Italian archaeologists had been engaged in the Pyramid excavations; and apart from these general ties, a large Italian colony in Alexandria and Cairo had drawn closer the links between the two countries. To many people Arabi Pasha appeared in the light of a Garibaldi. They were against opposing his movement, both because it seemed a struggle for independence and because opposition to it represented a flagrant negation of the principle of nationality in which they believed. This was the view put forward in the Camera by Di Sant-Onofrio, Delvecchio, Miceli, and Savini.⁴⁸ It was also Mancini's own view. But he linked with it other considerations—chief among them the cost of such an expedition, the obvious offence it would give France, and finally (most cogent reason of all) Italy's signature of the non-intervention pact drafted by the Conference of Constantinople.⁴⁹

His reasons for non-intervention were in fact exemplary and sincere; but unfortunately they were either not accepted abroad, or were taken as simply part of the general pattern of Italian weakness in diplomacy. Lord Cromer believed that Italy had refused the English offer because she was not sufficiently prepared from a military and naval point of view. Others thought she had dreaded an international complication with France. In short, from a practical, if not a moral, standpoint the refusal left Italy worse off than before, and Sonnino was justified when he remarked bitterly that "we (Italians) have been shown as materially and morally incapable of efficacious co-operation . . . always ready to accept an ultimate resignation, for love of peace, and order, and good principles. . . . All the statecraft of Italy seems resumed in the motto, 'wise inertia.'"

Such criticism, supported by other criticism of the same type, was not without effect. Mancini, who would have withstood simple unpopularity, had more difficulty in withstanding the suggestion that he had sacrificed Italy's interests. And in October 1884 colonial questions were again forced on his attention by public indignation over the murder of the Italian traveller, Gustavo Bianchi, and his companions—a murder

which occurred on the borders of the Red Sea between Assab and Makalle. Questioned in the Camera as to what action the Government proposed to adopt to make the name and interests of Italy respected in Africa, Mancini replied that the Cabinet had decided to despatch a garrison to the Bay of Assab.⁵⁰ The presence of the garrison would, it was thought, produce a double effect: (1) it would raise the prestige and authority of Italy in the Red Sea; (2) it would enable the Italian authorities to discover on the spot those responsible for the crime and obtain their punishment. And these were the general instructions given the regiment of Bersaglieri which, as the first Italian expedition to Africa, left Naples in January 1885.

Their immediate objective—the small Bay of Assab—was at this time already an Italian possession. It had been purchased in 1869–70 from the local Sultan by an Italian trading company (the Rubattino), and the Italian Government had in turn purchased it from the Rubattino Company in 1882.⁵¹ To establish a garrison there was not, accordingly, to initiate a colonial enterprise. Yet it was clear that the Government would hardly have despatched the expedition without some wider objective; and there were soon interpellations in the Camera regarding the possible development of an Italian “colonial policy.” In reply, Mancini showed that while he applied the principle of nationality to such a land as Egypt he stopped short of applying it to disunited, raiding tribes. He was prepared to accept the idea of Europe’s “civilizing mission towards the less advanced races” (the phrase was just coming into use, and its philanthropic content was unquestioningly accepted); he was in favour of finding some outlet for Italian emigration under an Italian flag; and, while he rejected the idea of costly adventures, still thought Italy could not reasonably exclude from her national programme a “prudent and modest colonial policy.”⁵²

Accordingly, two more expeditions followed in the wake of the first: Beilul was occupied, and Massaua and Arkiko and Arafali. The occupation had the encouragement of England. Lord Granville let the Italian ambassador in London know that England, preoccupied by the rapid growth of French interests in Africa, would be glad to see Massaua fall into

Italian and not French hands.⁵³ At first, moreover, there was even an idea that Italian troops should assist British in the Sudan against the Mahdi:⁵⁴ and the English decision to withdraw from the Sudan (after the fall of Khartoum) was a blow to the Italian Government. It deprived the expedition, in short, of one of the chief hopes which had underlain its despatch. Indeed, the general carelessness and incompetence with which the undertaking had been planned now began to be clearly shown. The heavy military coats in which the soldiers traversed the burning shores of the Red Sea became famous, as did the instructions of the Minister of War, who, serenely oblivious of geography, directed the commander of the expedition to try and make from Massaua a diversion on Khartoum.⁵⁵ The port of Massaua, furthermore—a barren and sandy strip of soil with hardly any advantage in itself—was valuable chiefly as a means of access to the interior, and enterprise there meant collision with Abyssinia, a kingdom most unusually well equipped to resist European penetration.

Already by the beginning of 1885 public and Parliament were restive regarding the whole venture. Whatever change might have occurred in Mancini's views, the great mass of the public was still unalterably opposed to the idea of African expeditions, and for the same general reasons as before. In February, March, and May, the Government had to answer repeated interpellations on colonial policy, and it was in vain that Mancini sought to defend himself. The criticism brought against him was for the most part unanswerable, and ranged from flat declarations that a policy of expansion was not suitable to Italy, to affirmations that the Mediterranean, and not the Red Sea, was the natural goal of Italy's efforts. One speech by Crispi contained especially a final judgment on the course pursued by the Government since the first raising of the Egyptian question. Had affairs depended on him he would, (he said), not have sent any forces to the Red Sea, but have accepted England's invitation in 1882. However, since Italy was now established at Assab, honour demanded that she remain. The mistake must be turned to profit and good extracted from something which should not in the first place have been undertaken. "We are established on the Red

Sea, and we are carrying out there what the Minister for Foreign Affairs calls a 'modest policy.' I do not understand 'modest policies,' especially in affairs as serious as that in which we are engaged. The honourable Mancini must . . . allow me to call his policy, not a 'modest' policy, but an 'undecided' and 'doubtful' policy. . . . I am against those who, with a very bourgeois sentiment, lament money expended and an expedition badly executed . . . but . . . you are men of half measures, irresolute, without knowledge of what you are doing—you have gone to the Red Sea without clear ideas. . . . I fear that in your hands this enterprise—wrongly begun—will bear no good fruit."⁵⁶

His words were typical of the dissatisfaction felt by the Camera over the whole situation. The Government was asked to give an assurance that no further advance would be made in Africa;⁵⁷ and when the Budget of Foreign Affairs came before the House it was voted by so narrow a margin (163 against 159) that on the 17th June the Ministry had to resign. The King re-entrusted Depretis with the formation of a new Ministry, partly because at this date it had become almost traditional to do so, partly because the majority in Parliament, while it attacked single ministers, would always rally to his support.⁵⁸ In the new Cabinet the Folio of Foreign Affairs was given to the erstwhile ambassador to Vienna, the Count di Robilant. Di Robilant was perhaps the only real diplomat Italy had produced since Cavour. His direction of foreign policy was competent, and in many respects remarkably brilliant; but he was unfortunately handicapped both by the course of events at home and his own European culture, which made him view enterprises in Africa rather as a fashionable diversion of the day than as serious elements in world politics.

Still, he made what some Italians thought a useful beginning with his work by indicating that he considered foreign policy as foreign policy, and not (like Mancini and Cairoli) as a species of Miracle play with Italy cast in the rôle of passive virtue or chorus for the delivery of noble sentiments. "I do not," he said in January 1886, "practise sentimentality of any kind in politics. I mean to follow a policy determined by the interests and dignity of my country . . . but apart from that

I am not bound either by prejudices or sentiments." It was a declaration that the Camera found startling—so startling that he was moved to repeat it more clearly. "Gentlemen, I have said that I have nothing in view but the interest and the greatness of my country. . . . I have said it; and without changing a word, I repeat and maintain it."⁵⁹ Certainly this attitude seemed more favourable to the redemption of Italy's prestige than the attitude of any Foreign Minister since 1870; but circumstances decreed that, though it should obtain excellent results in the field of European relations,⁶⁰ it should produce something like an African disaster. For, preoccupied with questions relating to the Triple Alliance, di Robilant neglected the progress of colonial events and ended by perpetuating and even aggravating Mancini's mistakes. Convinced from the outset that Italy would have done better not to go to Massaua, he took no steps to make Italian influence in that region effective, and when the Negus of Abyssinia showed himself irritated by the presence of the Italians at Saati, added to his mistrust by first despatching a mission to establish friendly relations, and then (when its members seemed in danger) abruptly recalling it.⁶¹ Such lack of firmness encouraged ill-will on the part of the Negus and insolent defiance on the part of local chieftains. It was in fact not long before Ras Alula threatened to attack the Italian forces, and to decapitate three distinguished Italian travellers who happened to have fallen into his hands, offering as an alternative an immediate withdrawal of Italian troops from Ua-á. It was a situation that called for energetic action on the part of the Government; but instead di Robilant (questioned in the Camera regarding the Government's intentions) showed that he thought the alarms and excursions of small African tribes beneath his own or the Deputies' attention. "Really," he said, "it does not seem to me convenient at the present time to attach much importance to a few robbers who happen to be raising dust around our feet in Africa."⁶²

Not a week after the words were spoken, an Italian column, which was advancing to the help of the Saati garrison, was surprised by a superior force of Abyssinians near Dogali and cut to pieces. Had the odds in favour of the Abyssinians been

less overwhelming, or the conduct of the troops less gallant, the episode might not perhaps have become a major event in Italian national life; but it was known that the three companies of soldiers had closed their ranks, had resisted till their ammunition was exhausted, and had then gone down to destruction with the single-minded courage of men preferring death to surrender.⁶³ Of five hundred and forty soldiers, four hundred and thirty were killed outright, and among them the gallant Colonel de Cristoforis—whence the Press of the day spoke of the “Italian Thermopylae” and demanded with intense bitterness to know what the Government had been about to allow such things to take place.⁶⁴ “It is not at Dogali that there are five hundred dead—but at Montecitorio,” ran one popular epigram, and indeed the crisis which immediately occurred in parliamentary life could hardly have done more to lower its reputation or irritate men more thoroughly with its procedure. Di Robilant, notwithstanding the excellence of his work in other fields, resigned; and the Cabinet, after vainly attempting to remain, had to follow suit. There ensued a prolonged period of indecision, of refusal on the part of anyone to undertake the responsibility of government, of intrigues among various party leaders, and of futile efforts to form some effective coalition.⁶⁵ The Deputies, in fact, seemed bent on showing that, while soldiers might die for Italy in Africa, politicians in Parliament could not renounce personal ambitions or sectarian grievances; and their attitude seemed the crowning instance of political decay in a period when political dissolution seemed to the public to manifest itself wherever they looked.⁶⁶

Indeed, within Italy, political life in 1887 seemed in a much worse state than in 1881, when the reform of the franchise had first exposed the forces undermining its health. From 1881 to 1885 a new phase seemed to have begun, a phase in which the dissolution of the parties proceeded more rapidly, while the individual Deputies (already disheartened by the failure of the wider electorate to achieve what had been expected of it) were becoming yearly more discouraged and more incapable of breaking through the vices of their own political routine. It was a development due very largely to the personal work

of Depretis, who in these years had brought to perfection a special instrument for the retention of personal power. The system of "*Trasformismo*," which had originated in a limited form as early as the 'seventies, was a system of winning over to the Government influential men of the Opposition, theoretically on the principle of securing the ablest men of all parties to serve the State, actually with the idea of allowing the Government to cling to office even when it had lost the confidence of the Camera.⁶⁷ Its procedure was simple. When a minister was maladroit enough to bring a defeat on the Cabinet his resignation was invited, and his place filled by some new Deputy selected haphazard from either Right or Left, according to the degree of support he could command in the Chamber and his capacity for formulating a policy acceptable to it. The question of whether the newcomer were of the right colour and shape to fit within the pattern of the Ministry was not considered, because in such a system coherency of ideas in the Cabinet, inner consistency of purpose among ministers, and the chance of real collaboration between them were at a discount. It presupposed the absence of collective Cabinet responsibility and of adherence to any party programme. In their place it put a system of quasi-permanent personal rule by a Prime Minister whose chief axiom of government was that of changing his colleagues in harmony with the waves of sympathy or antipathy which he detected in the mass of the Deputies before him. "*Transformism*," in short, so far as parliamentary institutions were concerned, did the work of a "machine-crusher," from beneath whose "wheels and cylinders there issued forth only atoms incapable of reintegrating themselves or of reacquiring a political physiognomy. . . ."⁶⁸

Yet not all its victims understood its true nature. It was in no sense simply an abstract principle of evil invented by a cunning schemer; it was rather a complex and human response to abnormal circumstances, a response adopted to his own purposes by an old politician who saw no particular harm in clinging to the power he loved. The general scheme of uniting all parties in a "national party" (as Depretis first called it) was in its own initial stages not unworthy. It became so only

when it ceased to be a positive principle and became a negative form for excluding Depretis's rivals from office. For while it was one thing to rule with a Coalition Government, it was quite another to rule with a Coalition Government which had no principles and was directed chiefly against the outstanding leaders of the Left.⁶⁹ It was while the system was in its interim stages that a large section of the Right, quite suddenly and surprisingly, surrendered to it. The surrender was not, as was maliciously said, due to mere self-interest or weariness of serving as Opposition.⁷⁰ Men of the quality of Bonghi and Minghetti would not, from self-seeking, have adopted towards it the attitude they did. The fact was simply that they had not grasped its implications and that they were confused by the peculiar conditions of the 'eighties. Minghetti, for instance, really believed that Parliament could not function rightly if it lacked clear parties representing two opposing systems of ideas—a conservative and an innovating philosophy. In these terms he admitted also the necessity of two parties for the normal functioning of a representative régime. But he said plainly that the political situation in Italy was not normal, and for the time being offered no real basis of distinction. He would undoubtedly have been in favour of maintaining the difference between Right and Left if he could have been honestly sure that it existed. But, eminent Right leader as he was, he could not in all sincerity find anything unacceptable in the Left's programme now that such issues as the grist-tax and the franchise were settled. Unconscious that such an admission was an implicit stricture on both his own party and the Left, he explained the phenomenon by declaring that Italy was passing through a transitory period in which the old issues had been settled and the new ones were still to arise. "What," he added, "do you mean by Transformism? If you mean by it men and parties which, instead of remaining immobile, modify their ideas and sentiments according to circumstances, according to public demands and different times and places—permit me to say that Transformism is the natural law of living things. There is no plant, no animal, no man who is the same to-day as he was yesterday. . . . If, on the other hand, you mean by 'transformism' the renunciation of ideas, convictions

and principles for petty or interested reasons, I repudiate the word and the idea of Transformism with all the strength of my spirit."⁷¹

By 1887, however, this was precisely what Depretis did mean by transformism. In the intervening years Minghetti had died, and with him his idealistic view of the system. Indeed, if the Deputies had not for some years been living amid the clash of ambiguities instead of realities, if they had not so often allowed themselves to be conquered by false opinions and the prejudices of a partisan Press, they would have had little real difficulty in recognizing from the first the disaster implicit in transformism. Such vigorous minds as Cavallotti and Zanardelli foresaw its end from the beginning and missed no opportunity to denounce it. Zanardelli and Baccarini (who shared his views) stated their point with such uncompromising frankness while still members of Depretis's Government that they had as a result to lose their portfolios (May 1883). As early as a year before this, moreover, Cavallotti had analyzed the situation with vivid brevity. "Say to the young that you are broadening your outlook, that there are wider horizons, more noble and more lofty ideals than those of our 'political acrobatics' . . . our petty agreements and transformations . . ." But, he added, if there were to be transformations, let them be great and true ones—not those of corruption.⁷² Again, in a speech at Turin on the 7th May, 1882, he was even plainer in his language: "Make your coalitions by all means; make a coalition of your interests, your consciences, your cynicism . . . your complaints and hatreds; we will oppose your coalition with a coalition of all those who work and suffer . . . and if this coalition becomes a whirlwind, so much the worse for you who have sown it."

Actually the possibility of such an opposition was wanting. There was no more conscious feeling among the "working classes" than there was among any of the other social classes. Each had its centre of gravity within itself, and (as we have seen) each pursued its own path individually, regardless of what was happening to its fellows or the environment in which it lived. Just as the politicians, absorbed in theoretical and legal conceptions, were out of touch with the country, so

the country, absorbed in its particular and daily work, was out of touch with the politicians. Like different worlds within the one universe, country and Parliament seemed to be proceeding at an equal distance from one another, scarcely even sharing the same experience. The people in general understood the corruption and the evils that were spreading through their Government; they did not understand its reform. It was useless for Cavallotti to expect them to supply the passionate will and the redeeming force needed for spiritual regeneration. The enlargement of the electorate had already shown that the inclusion of more masses without a more intelligent, directing minority was incapable of effecting anything of the kind.

Accordingly, the further process of transformism bred not rebellion but deeper pessimism. The resentment felt regarding the Triple Alliance, from which so much had been hoped; the disillusionment and suspicion engendered by the Government's experiments in colonialism; the tedious sequence of Cabinets, crises, and elections; the contrast between the ideals of enlightened Deputies and the abyss of an impoverished peasantry, between representative government and practical maladministration—all these seemed to confirm the feeling of disintegration. What was really the character of political life? How did the Government really function? Bitter replies were not wanting to such questions, nor was evidence lacking in support of their conclusions. "From 1878 on," remarked Francesco Crispi, speaking in May 1886, "there have been no political parties in Italy, but only politicians. These politicians, who have remained as it were autonomous, or else joined together in groups, have not always known how to make alliances with one another, or how to come to agreements. Indeed, each group comprises . . . an association of individuals who fatally, and according to circumstances, change their opinions. The men whom we have had in power have favoured this disorder. Instances of inconsistency and of apostasy have been treated as a meritorious means of climbing to office; and because the majority has been a fluctuating entity, it is *ministers* who have been changed, and not *ministries*. . . . Portfolios and public offices have been given to those who inside and

outside Montecitorio were useful to the Ministry, not to those who were worthy of office by reason of their studies. . . . In Parliament a kind of bi-lateral contract is often concluded. The Ministry gives the local population into the hands of the Deputy on condition that the Deputy promises the Ministry his vote. The nomination of the prefect, of the *pretore*, of the chief of police are made in the interest of the Deputy, with the object of maintaining local influence in his favour. . . . It is necessary to see the pandemonium at Montecitorio when the moment approaches for an important vote. The Ministry's agents run through the rooms and corridors . . . collecting votes . . . subsidies, decorations, canals, bridges, streets—everything is promised; and sometimes an act of justice long denied is the price of a parliamentary vote. . . . The picture I have painted has dark colours—but it is authentic, and not exaggerated.”⁷³ And if this were Crispi's own personal view, his criticism was confirmed by the remarks of other political observers. “In two or three years we have seen so many convictions changed, so many programmes broken that were linked with the obligations of good faith . . . we have seen the right to default on the most solemn promises erected into a theory of government . . . we have seen material interests occupying every day more and more the position of principles and great national interests, and skilfully, cleverly, deliberately fostered. We have seen parliamentarianism—which should be the highest expression of thought and the spirit of the patria—transformed little by little into a school of narrow particularism, of egoism, of discouraging incoherencies, and yet more discouraging audacities, of petty deceits and a petty policy. We have seen it reduced to a senile ability to compose day by day—to compose and recompose a majority, not according to the principles which define parties, but according to the weaknesses which lead astray the convictions of men. . . . We have seen the country disgusted, revolted by this example from above, become daily more despondent in its distrust of every ideal. . . . And should we not be permitted to raise a cry of protest here against this moral dissolution? . . . *If it be true that our institutions have not yet the melancholy of suicide, the time has come for the Senate and the Camera (l'assemblée)*

*to remember, and for others to remember, that the moral life of a community cannot with impunity be adulterated."*⁷⁴

They were Cavallotti's words—Cavallotti, radical and democrat, called the "defender of the people"—and what he said indicated precisely the worst point in Depretis's system. It not only corrupted those it ruled; it broke—and in a peculiarly subtle and deadly sense—their morale. The refusal either to recognize the existence of political morality, or to admit the necessity of inventing it: the suavely insistent evaluation of country and people in terms of their lowest denominator: these were things that made men blind to realities other than the sordid materialism in which they were imprisoned and left them convinced, not of the urgent and national necessity of effort, but of its complete and practical futility.

And meanwhile Depretis was growing old. He had in the last years steered his Ministries through an important amount of work (including the promulgation of a new commercial code by Zanardelli), but his amazing septuagenarian vitality could not last for ever. The episode of Dogali had, moreover, given his habitual serenity a shock; and though after sundry appeals to other leaders the King had asked him to resume office, he had formed his eighth Cabinet with more hesitation than at any time in his life. For he too knew that the end was coming, and that he was leaving politics disorientated . . . confused . . . without indication of a possible successor. Who, when he had gone, would manipulate the majority and balance on the tight-rope of Ministerial concessions? If his system were now to finish, what would be the next? And in the interim, what element could be found to give strength and comfort to the last days of his last Cabinet?

FRANCESCO CRISPI

THE answer to these difficult questions appeared suddenly and somewhat surprisingly in the person of Francesco Crispi. For in April 1887 Depretis induced him to accept the portfolio of the Interior, and when it was necessary to solve the crisis created by Depretis's death it was Crispi who was summoned to the premiership. No more pointed contrast to Depretis could have been imagined. Where the older politician had been pre-eminently the "incorruptible corruptor," skilfully securing his own permanence by playing on the wants and aspirations of others, Crispi frankly disdained the arts of personal strategy and detested the intrigues and conspiracies which he knew to prevail in the anterooms and corridors of Montecitorio.¹ Where, moreover, Depretis had been conciliatory, evasive, anxious only to postpone difficulties, the new Premier was combative, strong-willed, prone to insist on precisely those points most likely to provoke opposition. Power had no meaning for him except in so far as it meant the actuation of his principles, and his principles were frankly, openly—almost too openly—expressed. In place of the astuteness of Depretis, in place of Depretis's gift for guileless (apparently unconscious) deception, there was brusque clarity and a refusal even to indulge in verbal compromise. And with all this, where Depretis had preserved an Olympian calm in the cross-fire of parliamentary debate, Crispi was known for his quick Southern temper and the heat with which he would respond to affronts.² Why did he seem the only minister for the situation and the inevitable focus-point for a new era? Predominantly perhaps because people detected in him a man of energy upon whom they could (however irrationally) rely. Nor were they disappointed in this regard. Indeed, their expectations were even to be exceeded, for with almost incredulous surprise they observed a few months later that a statesman had appeared; and a statesman who believed, simply and passionately, in Italy, uniting faith as to her potential greatness with proud

ambition for her immediate future, and accompanying both by devotion to her service. Indeed, there was a curious quality in his patriotism that made it a living passion rather than an abstract sentiment; and it was this passion with all its ferocity and violence that slowly fascinated a generation trained in the coldness and the scepticism of Depretis.³ Exacting and oppressive as the new Government might be in some respects, its policy was neither aimless nor uninspiring; and men felt themselves somehow reassured by Crispi's very self-confidence and by the insistence with which he proclaimed himself the servant of the nation and the monarchy.

Certainly the new Premier had had a somewhat chequered past. A Sicilian conspirator and revolutionary and ex-radical and republican, he was a man whom adverse circumstances had kept from power for many years, and then broken almost at the moment of its achievement. Beginning his career as an obscure conspirator, he had become one of the most outstanding figures of the Risorgimento and had done more than any man to win Sicily for the crown of Italy. Later, however, when the political life of the United Kingdom had entered on a stable phase and its radical past had begun to be liquidated, his former political views had made him mistrusted, and he had been set aside by those who recognized his talents but did not want to accept his collaboration. Some of this mistrust he had overcome by patient waiting and hard work. In 1877 he had risen to be Minister for the Interior in one of Depretis's Cabinets, but while he was demonstrating his capacity for organization, his enemies had found material in his life for a charge of bigamy, and (assisted by a Press campaign) had forced his resignation. After this he had for a time retired from politics; but he could not permanently resist their magnetism, and had taken his place among the ineffective Deputies of the Opposition, filled with nostalgia to serve the State he had helped to create and becoming gradually more and more convinced of the supreme rights it should enjoy in a country where "only Italy should be strong."⁴ Perhaps these years of waiting had not been without effect on his character. Almost inevitably he had become *il solitario*, and had allowed his pride and the greatness of his purpose to isolate him from the

interests and prejudices of those who constituted his environment. Concentrating his mind on the fundamental needs of the nation, sharply aware of the corruption about him, he had not hesitated to criticize the pettiness of the Depretian régime, and after a decade of obscurity and almost hopeless dreaming of power was still not to be found enrolled in any of the political parties of the day. Though he had taken his seat on the Left because his philosophy was of a Leftist colour, he had remained steadfastly remote from its groups and factions, its coalitions of persons or ideas. "I am Crispi," he would reply when questioned as to his political allegiance; and the reply, with its mingled arrogance and aloofness, typified the man—the man whose pride it was to be true to himself rather than to a party, ready to submit his resignation to the Camera, but not his independence of mind.⁵

His political views were indeed as complex and paradoxical as they were sincere. A Conservative by temperament and instinct, he had had to become a revolutionary in order to establish the State he wished to serve; a fervent Republican and favourite of Mazzini, he had felt obliged to accept monarchism because he saw that no other solution was possible to regional antipathy.⁶ A rationalist and staunch anti-clerical, he had been compelled to subordinate private conviction to national necessity and advocate moderation in ecclesiastical policy and reconciliation with the Pope. A great believer in the principle of nationality and the right of small peoples to self-determination, he had become gradually also a believer in Imperialism and the validity of "colonial necessity"; an idealist where pacifism was concerned, and a thinker who regarded war as an "international crime" and hoped for nothing so much as a confederation of European peoples, he was to be converted to the methods of secret diplomacy and accept the idea of safeguarding peace by "conspiring" for it with a "military convention." Finally, an ultra-liberal in training and philosophy, he was to be driven into defending reaction and repressing that very revolutionary spirit which he himself had once expressed.⁸ The key to all these contradictions—the harmony in which all disharmonies were resolved—had been always his wish for Italy's welfare. It was a

principle on which he could not compromise, because it was for him more than a principle—at once an ideal, a vision, and a faith. Years after men understood as much, and, understanding, forebore to disinter the bones of his minor inconsistencies. But at this time his contemporaries were incapable of the large view of posterity; they judged him in terms of their own small prejudices, and when he seemed to evade them dismissed his ideas with the contemptuous assurance of hostility. “You—you are too great for Italy,” said a Deputy of the Left, annoyed by the largeness of his schemes. And it was a comment significant of the defeatism of the day and of the attitude which that defeatism had bred.

On becoming Premier he did not attempt to apply any special theory of government. Without upsetting either the constitutional character of parliamentary life or its normal procedure, he simply accelerated its rhythm and gave it a new stimulus to achievement. In one of his first important public speeches he lamented the destruction of the old parties of Right and Left, and expressed a sincere hope that they would be reconstituted so as to provide a regular parliamentary Opposition: and shortly afterwards an excellent list of reforms was suggested in the King’s address for the opening of Parliament—reforms which, it was clear, the new Ministry had planned and really meant to achieve. For the first time in many years a sense of dignity seemed to have re-entered public life, and with it a lofty conception both of the function and the responsibility of government. Almost without pause Parliament was induced to embark on the first organic and detailed work in the field of administration that had been done since the fall of the old Right and the accession of Depretis.⁹ A law regarding the Council of Ministers decreed that Under-Secretaries of State should be instituted in each ministerial department, in order that a competent political expert should always be ready both to help maintain continuity of policy and act as the minister’s proxy should the latter be absent from the Upper or Lower House. At the same time it was provided that the King should have the right to determine by decree the number of ministries and ministerial departments and the functions of the President of the Council (Prime

Minister).¹⁰ These were provisions designed (as Crispi said) to strengthen the power of the Executive, and indirectly protect the Ministry from insurgent attacks in the Camera, so that (as he added) "Parliament should not be made a tyrant and the Cabinet a slave"¹¹—a remark that was as indicative of his authoritarian temperament as the next reform (the Communal and Provincial Law) was typical of his democratic sympathies.¹² For this law gave "administrative electoral rights" to all those who could read and write, who were entered on the political lists, and paid five lire in taxation. It permitted the election of the mayors of all the larger communes and of the Presidents of the Provincial Deputations. It aimed, in short, at making the commune and the province autonomous entities so far as the management of local interests were concerned, and it represented an important measure of provincial emancipation. The enlightened spirit it expressed was moreover shown again in the New Laws for Public Health (December 1888), which really contributed to an improvement in the physical condition of the nation, reducing the death-rate, especially in the poorer regions, and providing for a more adequate sanitary inspection than had yet existed in the kingdom.¹³ Finally, as perhaps the most notable achievement of this period, there was Zanardelli's draft of a new penal code—a code based on liberal principles and putting an end to an almost intolerable state of legal confusion. For prior to 1889 three penal codes had been in force in Italy (the Sardinian, the Tuscan, and the modified Southern), and the work of revising and re-editing them as a collective whole was a task as monumental as it was necessary. Its success was, however, undoubted; and in view of its success and the excellence of his other work, it was a pity that Crispi should have chosen also to enact a new and retrogressive law for the maintenance of public order. In accordance with its terms, the authorities had to be given twenty-four hours' notice of the holding of any public meeting, and three days' notice of the holding of public processions and demonstrations: they were, moreover, equipped with special rights regarding the dissolution or prohibition of any meetings which they might disapprove, and were given other but equally important rights

regarding the supervisions of theatres and other forms of public entertainment.¹⁴ Indeed, the attitude expressed in the law was so clearly reactionary as to seem out of character with the rest of Crispi's work; and while his first activities met with the "general consent and approval of the political world," this law did not escape some decidedly irritated discussion. The country as a whole felt itself at last "to be in good hands and ably governed";¹⁵ people in general felt such confidence in Crispi that, as a contemporary wrote, they "took courage at the thought that he was a minister."¹⁶ Yet somewhere in this general sentiment of goodwill there was a dissonance—and so sharp a dissonance that it might have been taken as typifying the element that was to cause a permanent discrepancy between the man and his milieu.

It was not alone that Crispi (contrary to the benevolent practice of Depretis) gave the Camera little respite in the discussion of reforms; it was not alone his tactless insistence on the necessity of work regardless of, for instance, the increasing heat in Rome, the approach of the summer vacation, and a general spirit of fatigue among the Deputies. These things might have been overlooked. But there was another element that roused a spirit of angry opposition, even of hatred, among men who might not otherwise have been ill-disposed. Unconsciously Crispi himself had started it by assuming the position, not only of Prime Minister, but of Minister of the Interior and for Foreign Affairs—a procedure that was against official tradition because it brought an alarming amount of power into the hands of one man. The gesture had diminished the Camera's goodwill towards him at once, and he had not improved its state of mind by a speech at Turin in which he had remarked that ". . . in exceptional times extraordinary power may be conceded to one person, and Parliament and nation hasten to rally round him . . ." a remark that, even though it was accompanied by a saving clause binding this favoured individual to use his power only in the interest of a swift return to normal conditions, still seemed ominous for the future of political life.¹⁷

It had not wanted much after this to make people speak of authoritarianism and "dictatorial rule"; and their suspicions

seemed confirmed by circumstances which made Crispi more and more clearly the real centre round which the political system revolved. The old parties in Parliament (though not lacking opportunity to reconstitute themselves) still continued to remain in factions, quarrelling internally with one another, but signally failing to formulate any real party principles or even party programmes.¹⁸ And confronted with their confusion, Crispi did not hide the fact that he felt himself master of the situation. As early as 1889, in an address to the Camera, he used the first personal pronoun with unequivocal frequency, speaking firmly of "his" ideas and "his" proposals, and finishing by briefly rejecting any blame for the will-less state into which the Camera had drifted. "The old parties," he said, "have been destroyed, and it was not I who destroyed them. The new parties have not yet emerged; that is not my fault. There are moments when certain pledges and obligations and also duties demand that the administration of these two ministries be directed by the same person."¹⁹

And in accordance with this belief he did not attempt to control Parliament with the gentle arts of flattery and cajolery used in the Depretian era. It was enough—for him—to know that he possessed talents greater than his opponents; that he was their superior in devotion, in decisive direction of affairs, and even in clearness of political purpose.²⁰ He did not reflect that this superiority, brusquely insisted on, might be exasperating to his entourage; or that the measures which he imposed on Parliament (measures often excellent in themselves) might be resented rather than appreciated because they were stamped with his personality and brought to life by his irresistible will. Preoccupied with the urgency of the achievements at which he was aiming, peremptory and uncompromising by nature, he would not defer to the ideas of those about him, or divide with others the responsibility—whether popular or unpopular—of his acts.²¹ As for the Deputies' wounded susceptibilities and the public's outraged sense of decorum, he was aware of them, in so far as he was aware of them at all, chiefly as minor obstructions in the path to greatness of that entity which he delighted to call "my Italy."

It was in this way that he unconsciously cut himself off

from the people he most wished to serve and began the estrangement between his aspiration and theirs. For in reality it was not "his Italy" that he was to govern, but the Italy of some 33 million Italians, and their views could not be thus brusquely overlooked. It was of course true that these millions had, as he thought, too long been absent from the life of the State to know what was needed for its good health and reform. It was of course also true that they were politically inexperienced, and so new to collective life that they were not even familiar with its topography; but with all this they were not a negligible force. To treat them as so many passive means to an end was to defeat the end itself; for the plain fact remained that they were not passive means, but active human beings who needed to be convinced that the changes in the direction of public affairs (and the changes it meant in their lives) were really worth the effort demanded. The more or less educated section of the public wanted, in short, at least the illusion of participation in their own national life; and if national life were really to be established on a sound and permanent basis they really required something more: they required a patient process of education and encouragement, a feeling of reciprocal trust flowing from Government to people and from people to Government. Clearly, in an old, disillusioned and sceptical race these desiderata would have been painfully difficult to attain. Yet an effort at interpretation, comprehension, and—above all—*communication* might have achieved a tremendous amount. The tragedy was that Crispi's very character made it impossible for him to have the right attitude for such work. He was too sensitive, too easily put on the defensive, too ready to respond to hostility by enveloping himself in his pride. A man who had been much goaded in public life, he had not the necessary equilibrium to endure with serenity the initial misunderstanding which must inevitably follow efforts at giving new meaning to Italy's future. Although he had devoted all his energy to rescuing the Sicilian population from the scourge of the cholera epidemic, although with all his authoritarian gestures he never dreamt of autocratic government, and even planned to erect for Parliament a palace worthy of its dignity, still he was forced outside the circle of his contem-

poraries' hopes, interests, and ideas. He was, in short, always defeated by his temperament; for blinded by it (blinded perhaps by his lack of psychological sense) he did not see that what nation and people required of him was his energy, his inspiration and his leadership, but in a diffused and less aggressively individual form—a form that would make them an integral element in Italy's national existence, rather than a dynamic force driving her on to undertake experience for which she had not as yet the strength. The nuance was perhaps too subtle for a man of his character to grasp; but in missing it he missed the last chance of achieving a reconciliation between the nation's ideal and his own. As it was, the misunderstanding between them made him less a Cavourian Prometheus, consciously equipped with fire for Italy's redemption, than a Sicilian Cyclops striking powerfully at whatever appeared in his way, and almost as a matter of course taken by his enemies on the side of his blind eye.

These various contradictions and difficulties did not, however, at once appear in his work. There was at this time only a trend towards them—a trend which appeared perhaps most significantly in the fact that he made no attempt to form a party for himself. Though he might on special occasions speak of national union and the subordination of sectarian feeling, it did not really occur to him to try and unite the best elements in Parliament under a general banner of reform. Perhaps he was too conscious of the personal enmity which many Deputies felt towards him; perhaps he was by nature too independent and aloof; perhaps (most of all) he still unconsciously accepted the old party divisions and thought that, though the old historic Right and Left had ceased to exist, the new forms for political association must represent the same general ideological differences. It was quite characteristic of him, and of his tendency to mix Liberal thought with his somewhat dictatorial measures, that he now turned his attention to bringing the King nearer his people. Aware of the integrating power which the Crown might have, he urged Umberto to undertake a tour through the Romagna, a province which had remained a stronghold of violent republican agitation. The tour, undertaken by the King and Queen with the courage characteristic

of the House of Savoy, fulfilled his hopes. Enthusiastic demonstrations indicated that the peasants knew how to appreciate the confidence of their Sovereign, and Umberto's continued personal interest in the province helped still more to achieve the stabilization of a hitherto unstable element.²²

It was a stroke of policy that somewhat offset the Government's trials in other fields; for about this time it encountered a major problem in the question of economic relations with France. The immediate point at issue was the question of the renewal of the Franco-Italian commercial treaty denounced by di Robilant some time before. With the increasing development of industrial life in northern Italy a strong movement had grown up in favour of protectionism, and it was felt that the old agreements injured rather than safeguarded the interests they were supposed to cover. Italy wanted a new treaty negotiated to meet a new situation, and discussions to this end might have proceeded without great difficulty if on the French side the issue had not been complicated by arguments of a political nature. For France was against renewing the treaty; not only had she too been converted to protectionism, but she knew Italy had recently renewed the Triple Alliance, and she did not accordingly wish to grant Italy any economic facilities. Indeed, the point was expressed with cutting directness by one of the French negotiators, who remarked to an Italian representative that "as long as the Triple Alliance lasts a commercial agreement between France and Italy will not be possible."²³

It was an attitude that imposed considerable suffering on the Italian people, and more especially on the Southerners, whose wine, oil, rice, and fruit were suddenly deprived of an outlet. Though Crispi made repeated efforts to arrive at a mutual compromise, commercial relations between the two countries were broken off in February 1888, and shortly after he found himself obliged to take the defensive measure of ordering the application of the new Italian tariff against all French goods. It was the beginning of an economic and financial war between the two countries—a war in which France (as a wealthy Power) escaped relatively lightly, but as a result of which the flow of Italian commerce diminished in

one year alone by 600 millions, and many peasants of Sicily, and the Neapolitan provinces found themselves faced with ruin.²⁴ They expressed their misery less in resentment against France than in criticism of Crispi's government and foreign policy. And he was unable to lessen their discontent in any practical fashion. Though he remarked that in reality the new trend of events would make Italy stronger than ever before by making her become economically and financially independent, his words met with a cold reception from people whose livelihood had been severely affected; and his speech on the subject (interesting and curiously modern as it was) did little to stem the tide of unpopularity which had begun to turn against him. "Unfortunately," he said, "there is blowing in Europe, and in France especially, a protectionist wind that discourages the most fervent and tenacious supporters of the régime of commercial liberty. It is the tendency of our times; the nations that are arming by land and sea are fortifying themselves also by customs walls. But this feeling towards autonomy, if well directed, may make Italy issue from the struggle . . . stronger and more powerful, even economically. In every war there are dead and wounded, and there may be dead and wounded in economic battles too. But a strong people should not be discouraged by this. We must look at the aim, at the end which is before us, and this end . . . is such as to merit all our efforts, and I am sure we shall reach it. . . . After having conquered national independence, after having become politically a great state . . . it is necessary to strengthen ourselves also economically and financially . . . so as to make ourselves independent of other nations."²⁵

Unfortunately for Crispi, the "dead and wounded" whom he envisaged in the tariff war were soon to be joined by a company of "mutilated" from the taxation campaign. And where the first did not shake his Ministry the second brought its fall. For in February 1889 the Minister for Finance revealed that the deficit in the Budget amounted to 96 millions; and of necessity proposed a notable increase in certain of the more important taxes.²⁶ After a long and vehement debate the Deputies felt that they could not do less than express their firm hostility to his measures; and at the end of the month Crispi,

seeing that he would no longer be able to count on a majority, resigned without putting the issue to the test of a formal vote. His action was not in accordance with normal procedure, but he declared that the Ministry preferred voluntarily to leave office rather than "compromise the great interests of the State by a parliamentary vote."

It was an evasion of outright defeat, and it met its reward in the next weeks. The King found it impossible to discover a leader ready to assume the premiership. After trying Biancheri, Farini, and Saracco he saw that Crispi was still the only strong personality for the situation, and in March called on him again to solve the crisis. Crispi did so by changing the Minister of Finance, the Minister for the Treasury, and the Minister of Public Works.²⁷ The rest of the portfolios he simply left as before. Accordingly his new Cabinet bore a suspicious resemblance to the old *rimpastimento* Cabinets of Depretis, and in the Camera criticism of his methods was reinforced by a resurrection of the old charge of exercising "dictatorial rule." On this point Bonghi expressed the general view when he remarked that "the union of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for the Interior in the hands of the President of the Council (the Premier) radically destroys the constitution of the Cabinet. When the two most important political ministries are in the hands of one person, the other ministers become mere sectional heads, or at the most, technical ministers, if they are technical. . . . It is no longer a question of a series of collective deliberations, but of one will, which attracts all others to itself . . . the other ministries become simply the executors of the will of the President of the Council (Premier). . . ."²⁸ In answer, Crispi pointed to the precedent of Cavour (who had united tenure of the premiership with tenure of precisely the same two portfolios), and added that since the Camera had expressed approval of his policy in all spheres but the financial, a change in the Ministry of Finance together with a radically reformed financial policy was as adequate a response to the will of Parliament as could under the circumstances be made. On this speech he collected a vote of confidence, and during the succeeding months he continued the important legislative work which he had begun in his first Ministry. A reform of

the prison system (intended to make it more humane and enlightened) was accompanied by a reform of administrative justice which was intended to prevent the arbitrary use of power by the executive, and put an end to those long-standing abuses of which Minghetti had complained in 1880. It was followed moreover in March 1889 by the creation of a fourth section of the Council of State, which was entrusted with special rights of jurisdiction over such of the executive's acts as might otherwise have escaped the sphere of legal control.²⁹ Both measures, with their careful attempt to protect the country from arbitrary rule or the abuse of special Government influence, seemed like a direct response to the suspicious judgments passed by Crispi's critics. Unfortunately, however, circumstances abroad combined to force him again into the adoption of an unpopular foreign policy; and in handling relations with France, and in dealing with the Irredentist question, he aroused again that very mistrust which he might, in other circumstances, have allayed.

Actually his tour abroad prior to the Congress of Berlin had shown that he lacked talent for diplomacy. With his volcanic temperament and his tendency to almost violent directness of speech he was incapable of diplomatic euphemisms, or of the *suaviter in modo* which would have allowed his adversaries to accept a *fortiter in re*.³⁰ Characteristically and almost inevitably his policy was one of passion, of a quick and impetuous response to whatever touched his imagination or awoke his over-credulous suspicions. "When one loves greatly, one fears greatly," he said once. And fear for Italy, fears of all sorts and kinds, checked his reason and biassed his judgment. Instead of examining his position thoughtfully and finding its just perspective, he too often allowed himself to be stampeded into accepting false information as true: in this way serving as the tool by which his European colleagues neatly retrieved chestnuts from inconvenient national fires. Indeed, his chief asset as Minister for Foreign Affairs was simply an intransigent sense of national honour and a sincere sentiment of national self-respect. Here at least he was superior to those Foreign Ministers who since the kingdom's foundation had gone about behaving (in the words of one Deputy) "as if

Italy were a mendicant in need of Europe's compassion."³¹ Instead of the "faint-hearted and submissive attitude" which Depretis and even Visconti-Venosta and Cairoli had adopted towards foreign Governments, he insisted at least that Italian interests should be set in a European context and treated as a matter of international concern. "I know, gentlemen," he said one day, addressing the Camera, "there are some (of you) who for twenty-seven years have been accustomed to think that Italy must await her verb from Paris or Berlin. But a day has come when a man has arisen who believes Italy to be the equal . . . of . . . other nations, and wishes to make her words heard and respected."³² And this sentence was no mere figure of speech. Deceived as he often was, and baulked of material advantage behind the scenes, he still sustained Italy's prestige worthily on the European stage, creating in Italians themselves a "sense of national dignity, of pride, of consciousness of their own strength, and of faith in their future as a people."³³

The two most characteristic points in his foreign policy were his attitude to France and to the Triple Alliance. So far as France was concerned his enemies accused him of anti-French feeling amounting to Gallophobia. The accusation was not a fair one. An old Jacobin with warm sympathy for the philosophy of the Revolution, he was also an enthusiast regarding French culture. He even went so far on one occasion as to say that a conflict between Italy and France would be "rather a civil war than a war of nation against nation,"³⁴ and at a later date when discussing the Triple Alliance spoke of it regretfully as an alliance based on expediency, and not (as an alliance with France would have been) on sentiment and feeling.³⁵ Confronted, however, with the contemporary direction of French policy, confronted with the apparent threat of French clericalism and the advance of French aggrandisement in the Mediterranean, he had been forced to the conclusion that the two countries were separated by "irreconcilable national programmes." "Between France and Italy," he said, "there are two questions—the Mediterranean and the Pope,"³⁶ and studying the history of the friction between them he arrived at the idea that French policy aimed at the destruction

of the Italian kingdom in order that a weak federation of small states might be formed on the French frontier. It was an idea that made him profoundly suspicious of any negotiations with French ministers; and while it hardly occurred to him that France might read sinister intentions into his own mistrustful attitude, he detected sinister motives in any declaration which France made regarding Italy. In this way a mutual misunderstanding between the two nations gradually developed into mutual hostility, and there arose that curious state of mental war in which to hate and depreciate another nation appears somehow to render service to one's own. The Press of both countries unnecessarily embittered their relations, and while Crispi assured French Governments (with over-ready insistence) that he "would not play the part of a lamb," different French Governments on their side added to his nervousness by a series of minor injuries and intrigues directed against Italy's interests.³⁷

Indeed, irrational and unfounded as Crispi's fears were, they did not lack provocation. As the statesman responsible for Italian policy he was made the object of vehement personal attacks, while Italy herself was first struck by the tariff war with France and then alarmed, not only by the spectacle of secret intrigues between the Vatican and its Gallic supporters, but by the arrival of French money designed to help Italian radicals and republicans win their electoral contests. Finally, presiding over these skirmishes between the two countries there was the figure of Bismarck; and not only the figure of Bismarck, but that of Solms, German ambassador in Rome, who naturally served the interests of the country he represented by fostering dissensions between its ally and its traditional enemy. Here in fact the fundamental cause of Franco-Italian mistrust came into play. For while the pin-pricks of French ill-will drove Crispi into flourishing Italy's friendship with Germany, his flourishing of it drove France into a renewed display of hostile policy towards Italy. It was a vicious circle in which wounded national *amour propre* and the unreasoning impulses of fear brought relations between the two countries into a dangerously tense condition.

The general character of the situation had developed already

in Crispi's first Ministry, when he had on one occasion allowed himself to be persuaded of the possibility of a sudden act of aggression on the part of France, and had even informed England that "Italy must expect to be attacked" (February 1888). The general ill-feeling between the countries had moreover revealed itself in a series of minor diplomatic episodes, in which he had taken a firm stand, vindicating Italy's rights against the claims put forward by French consuls in Massaua, Tunis, and Florence, and adopting in intercourse with French ministers a tone so frankly independent as to make it clear that the long series of hurts to Italian pride begun with Rouher's *jamais* and the arrival of the Orénque were at an end. None of these events had of course contributed to a *détente* between France and Italy; and matters were made worse when in October 1888 the Kaiser visited the King and Queen in Rome, and when in May 1889 King Umberto returned the visit in Berlin. Worse still, these formal visits were given wider meaning by signs of a personal *rapprochement* between Bismarck and Crispi, in accordance with which Crispi was the Chancellor's guest at Friedrichsruhe in September 1887, and again in August 1888. Actually the discussions he had with Bismarck were not nearly so momentous as the Press of their respective countries tried to imply.³⁸ Memoirs and diaries which have since been published show that they left the Triple Alliance a purely defensive agreement, and that the two statesmen concocted nothing which could interfere with the normal development of French interests. In the political climate of the day, however, any interview between Bismarck and the leading statesmen of Italy was liable to be interpreted by French public opinion as little short of a conspiracy or a deliberate manoeuvre to strike at the security of France. And Crispi, with his naïve pride in the deference paid his country, with his sincere admiration for Bismarck's personality, and his tendency to give the interviews as large an importance as possible, certainly did nothing to minimize French anxiety. Perhaps it was not surprising that French public opinion reacted violently to the situation, or that in 1889 Crispi should have fallen a victim to the alarmist tales of a secret agent who declared that the Republic was preparing to attack Italy by

land and sea.³⁹ With the international tension at such a pitch it was very difficult to think clearly or allay panic by reasoned consideration of the factors involved. Urging the Minister of War to fresh efforts in accelerating armament, he expressed himself in a fashion that showed how far his mind had yielded to the strain of events. "Europe is at present a volcano, which may from one moment to another erupt, and it is necessary that we should be ready. Every day we awake with the danger that war has broken out. Unfortunately we ourselves are behind all others (in preparation), and we are the first exposed to enemy attacks. On land and sea the neighbouring Republic has prepared all that is necessary to attack us. . . . The French, in order to appear in the right, have wished to create the conviction that I want war. My enemies in Italy lend themselves to this unworthy and unpatriotic manoeuvre. No statesman can want war. And I cannot want it both because we are not strong enough, and because if we *were* strong I should not dare to challenge the results of a conflict whose outcome is never sure."⁴⁰

It soon appeared of course that his alarms and excursions were without ground. But they indicate why a certain section of opinion in Italy regarded the Triple Alliance as a necessary and even essential form of protection; and why Crispi himself from the day he came to power strove to combat its unpopularity in Italy. Faith in the Austro-German alliance was the inevitable corollary of his relations with France, and nothing caused him more distress than the hostile attitude which his countrymen persisted in maintaining towards the agreement. The hostility was (as always) rooted in the issue of Irredentism, which made the great mass of people prefer to disbelieve in danger from France rather than enter into collaboration with the oppressor of Trieste and Trent. Arguments on the expediency of treating their formal ally with complaisance, and France with armed reserve (instead of habitually reversing the process) fell on ears that were wilfully deaf; and while Crispi strove to make the agreement respected in the spirit as well as the letter he met with spasmodic instances of anti-Austrian and pro-French feeling—instances that were carefully encouraged by the Radical Deputies and the leaders of the

Irredentist associations, who had reasons of their own for inciting public opinion to demand a change in the direction of foreign policy. So in June 1887 the popular leader, Cavallotti (speaking of the inauguration of the International Exhibition in Paris), joined to his congratulations the hope that "this great festival of art, which shall see France and Italy associated in comradeship, shall of itself assume a reparatory character. (I hope) that it will teach both (nations) that above small politics, above small rancours and petty misunderstandings there are the great politics of work and love, which are inspired by racial genius, by blood relations and by common ideals of civilization. . . ."41 And even more indiscreet words were spoken by M. R. Imbriani some time later, when at a meeting in Paris he openly put forward arguments against the Triple Alliance and in favour of what he called a union of Latin nations. "We French and Italians have common principles in the field of civilization, and we have common ill-fortune in regard to our country. Your frontier is open and is at the mercy of Germany, just as our frontier is open and at the mercy of Austria. And it is this Latin idea that terrifies our enemies; they would divide our two peoples, the people of Mazzini and Garibaldi and Victor Hugo! A vain hope in which they will not succeed."42

It was, however, unfortunately true that France was not ready for an understanding with Italy; that her different Governments at this time still retained the ideas of the Risorgimento period, when it had seemed natural for Italians to occupy a subservient position and appear rather as the protégés than as the free and equal partners of France. To conciliate Italy's pride, to win her from the Triple Alliance not by economic pressure and secret diplomacy, but by an open policy of respect and goodwill—these were things that contemporary French politicians lacked the mental flexibility to attempt. Instead, they adopted an attitude where it seemed that Italy should solicit the Republic's friendship; or even worse, that to accept its friendship was somehow to accept defeat. It was for these reasons that Nigra (Italian ambassador to Vienna, and a most prudent political thinker) supported Crispi's ideas regarding the policy to pursue, expressing himself on the

subject with irresistible and realist logic. "I deplore the fact that this alliance (the Triple Alliance) is not popular amongst us, and that people do not understand its necessity. My sympathy and liking for France date from some time, and I have never tried to hide them . . . certainly if I saw the possibility of an alliance between France and Italy, I should not be here. But even when the direction of the relations between Italy and France were in the hands of men who were notoriously the friends of France, like Cairoli and Cialdini, not only was an understanding between the two governments not possible, but there was the blow of Tunis. If in spite of all this there is no liking amongst us for the Austrian alliance, it shows that our poor country has not been sufficiently miserable, and that it has need of other and even more disastrous and humiliating lessons." And, surveying the European situation, he added that circumstances presented Italy with only one alternative: "Either the Austrian alliance with all its burdens, but with security; or fall at the feet of France."⁴³

It was in accordance with these views that in his second Ministry especially Crispi showed that his Government meant to uphold the alliance with resolution and courage, regardless of the criticism poured forth by uninformed public opinion. "A government," he said, "that does not give other nations the assurance that not only it, but also the citizens under its rule, will respect treaties is a government unworthy of its mission." And he refused to tolerate any anti-Austrian propaganda or agitation. Even when Austria (somewhat unfairly) broke up an Italian educational association in Trieste, he put down retaliatory disturbances with a firm hand and did not shrink from dissolving such prominent Irredentist clubs as the Barsanti and Oberdan circles when their activities seemed irreconcilable with public order. Later he took decided steps in regard to the behaviour of the Minister of Finance, Seismit-Doda; for when Seismit-Doda, during the course of a banquet at Udine, allowed Irredentist speeches to be made in his honour,⁴⁴ Crispi first invited him to hand in his resignation, and then, when the resignation was refused, unceremoniously deposed him from office by means of a royal decree. Nor did he hesitate to confront popular anger over the episode. While

feeling against his action was at its height he challenged hostility by officially speaking against Irredentism at Florence. "For some time a dangerous tendency has, with persuasive words, been seeking to lead astray the mind of the people—(a tendency) that calls for a vindication (of our rights) to the Italian lands not united to the kingdom. But though it is seemingly surrounded by the inspired poetry of patriotism, Irredentism to-day is not the least injurious of errors in Italy. It is, at the same time, an enemy to unity which it pretends to complete, and to that peace of which it affirms itself the apostle . . . its cry is in fact a cry of war, which could put in doubt the existence of the nation."⁴⁵ And speaking of the general question of a *rapprochement* with France, or the maintenance of the pact with the Central European Powers, he pointed out that if Austria ceased to be the friend and ally of Italy, she might easily become an element in a Catholic league meant to help the Pope regain his temporal power. As for France, he reminded his hearers that the Third Republic seemed more intent on detaching Italy from her allies than on offering her the alternative of French friendship, and he concluded the speech with a phrase that was to remain famous in Italian history: "Alliances may be compared to marriages: there are those of love and those of convenience." And Italians must firmly accept that which safeguarded their interests.

The unpopularity which the realism created was serious: and it occurred unfortunately just at a moment when discontent was being gradually felt with other aspects of the Government's work. The severe economic crisis which had begun in 1887 had entered on a worse phase. Southern agriculture was still crippled by failure to reach commercial agreement with France; the building trade (which had received a stimulus from the establishment of the capital at Rome) was passing through a period of unusual contraction following the excessive speculation; and finally all those difficulties had been aggravated by a crisis among the banks. While such of them as the *Tiberina* and the *Credito Mobiliare* had failed outright, failures in business, which had amounted to 1,306 in 1887, had risen to 2,180 in 1888, and had created about this time a

general psychological depression which men tended to ventilate in criticism of their Government. Indeed, after a fairly long period of rule Crispi did not seem to have achieved the outstanding successes which had been expected of his energy and will. Perhaps men forgot that such outstanding successes were impossible unless the material for them existed, and that Italy's position was hardly such as to supply it; perhaps, looking at Crispi's foreign policy, they forgot how small a part Italy had played in European life before his advent to power, and how much he had done to give her European significance and a place in the European world. The Italy against whom France was ready to use the weapon of commercial war, the Italy whom Bismarck flattered and to whom Austria showed respect, was not the *Italiotta* that had left the Congress of Berlin "last among the nations of Europe" or, after the annexation of Tunis, vainly asked help from the more fortunate of her European neighbours. These were, however, points overlooked in the impact of economic distress. When in January 1891 Grimaldi declared that the deficit for 1890-91 was 45 millions, and that extraordinary measures must be taken to deal with it, opposition to new taxation swamped every other consideration. It was Bonghi (always skilled in distorting facts by moralistic judgment) who rebuked the Government for not giving the country a balanced economic future: and it was Crispi himself who, stung by the provocation offered, sealed his fate by an ill-judged attack on his opponents' party. Alluding to the first days of the kingdom's creation, he accused the old Right of having followed "a servile policy towards the foreigner."⁴⁶ In response, not only the Deputies of the Right, but the Deputies of nearly every party, united to show their disapproval of his words. For whatever truth there might be in his accusations, there was hardly a man in the Camera who did not respect the memory of Lanza and Spaventa, of Minghetti and Sella and the old veterans of the struggle for unity. Though Crispi proceeded to make the order of the day into a vote of confidence, though he declared that "this vote will tell the foreigner whether Italy desires a strong government or whether it is her intention to return to the governments which have

brought discredit on our country by their hesitations and inconsistencies," a hostile vote of 186 to 125 brought his rule to an end in January 1891.

Actually he was not to remain long out of power. The two succeeding Ministries of di Rudini and Giolitti proved ephemeral creations, incapable of restoring people's confidence or of dealing with the problems of the day. Di Rudini (at this time the leader of the Right) did not lack intelligence or integrity, but he was a man of small ideas and somewhat colourless personality. He declared resolutely that his Ministry meant to take "economy" as its banner,⁴⁷ and he formulated the two slogans "a miser's rôle" and "a stay-at-home policy"; but though these things certainly provided a striking contrast to Crispi's large schemes, they proved curiously unable to help the financial situation. In foreign affairs they led di Rudini to submit to the French fortification of Biserta and to limit Italian colonial activities to the triangle Massaua, Asmara, Keren—a sacrifice of national interest for which men might reasonably have expected some gain at home. Failing to obtain it and dissatisfied with the general course of events, the Opposition defeated his Ministry on a Budget question in May 1892, and the way was open for another Government of the Left, led this time by Giovanni Giolitti.

Giolitti was at this date something of an unknown quantity in the Camera, but was generally known to possess marked technical capacity and a certain gift for intrigue. Like di Rudini, he gave immediate prominence to economic matters and declared that he regarded the systematization of finance and the economic regeneration of the country as the two most important tasks before him.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, however, he failed to give any concrete indication of how he meant to realize these aims, and Cavalotti's remark that his programme of government contained chiefly "vague, nebulous, and generalized formulas" was not without some justification.⁴⁹ In any event, however, he was scarcely given an opportunity to test his policy, for not long after his entry into office there occurred the worst known scandal in the history of Italian public life. Rumours regarding misappropriation of funds and irregularities in the accounts of the Bank of Rome had been

current for some time.⁵⁰ Three special commissioners had been appointed to inspect its functioning as early as June 1889, but their report had been neglected by di Rudini and even by Giolitti himself, who had successfully ignored its revelations until 20th December, 1892. On that date, however, Napoleone Colajanni (a Southerner renowned both for his fearless courage and his humanitarian studies) rose in Parliament to challenge official action by describing the worst abuses which he knew to be outlined in the Report; and after this it was only a matter of weeks before the question dominated every aspect of public life. Refusing a parliamentary inquiry (and the refusal was counted against him), Giolitti still could not avoid the appointment of an official and extraordinary commission of inquiry; and its investigations, patiently and honestly carried out, shook public opinion to its foundations. Perhaps in essentials the revelations that were made of official corruption, of embezzlement of money, of bribes and fraud, were no worse than the revelations which accompanied the Panama scandals in France. But they made a peculiarly deep impression on a people only just endowed with free institutions and only just emerged from centuries of despotic exploitation. Men tended to regard them as signs of a moral cancer in national life: and when the Ministry resigned after something like a tragic scene in Parliament, there were many who agreed with the manifesto issued by the Deputies of the Extreme Left. "The Ministry of Giovanni Giolitti falls because it has been lacking in truth towards Parliament, in respect towards justice, and in duty towards morality."⁵¹

Just at this moment, moreover, two events occurred that seemed to deprive the Government of its last claim to political authority. In August 1893 some excited French crowds began a riot directed against the four hundred Italian workmen employed in the salt-mines of Aigues-Mortes; and Giolitti's Foreign Minister adopted so weak and indifferent an attitude that men's minds turned instinctively to the memory of Crispi and his jealous defence of Italy's prestige. Almost at the same time there came news too of disturbances in Sicily, of a movement of workers' unions (*Fasci*) engaged in a violent insurrection against their employers and the local State

authorities.⁵² Here at least the Government might have shown a spirit of comprehension, or (failing comprehension) might have reassured public nervousness by taking a firm stand and showing that it had the situation under control. But it did neither. It indicated that it possessed good intentions towards both parties by following a policy of neutrality and declaring that the economic struggle should be allowed to find its own solution. Certainly this decision was a sincere expression of Giolitti's belief that the moment had come for a "practical experiment with democratic principles,"⁵³ but it would have been better either to assist the cause of democracy by promising a social reform of the Sicilians' grievances, or else prevent their movement from assuming dimensions where it seemed a civil insurrection and had to be put down by the proclamation of a state of siege and the despatch of troops from the mainland.

These events were, however, a later development in the situation and followed on from Crispi's return to the premiership in December 1893. The Sicilian disturbances were almost inevitably the first question which his Government considered, not only because it was the one dominating public attention, but because people seemed peculiarly to rely on his reputation for energy and trust that he would deliver them from their difficulties. In reality he did not understand the situation in the island, as he did not understand the phenomenon of Socialism, and his course of action was unnecessarily hard towards both.

Socialism, in the modern sense of the term, had first been popularized in Italy by Bakunin, who in 1867 had founded a branch of the International Association of Workers in Naples.⁵⁴ It had taken swift root in Southern Italy, and though its initial progress in the North had been slow, it had gained ground there once the new protective tariffs had brought about a general expansion of industry. As moreover the influence of Marx replaced that of Bakunin the practical organizing power of the movement increased, and in 1880 a "Workers' Party" had been formed at a Congress held in Bologna. About this date too newspapers had begun to appear expressing the Socialist point of view, and further steps in organization had

been achieved at the Congress of Genoa (1892) and at that of Reggio in Emilia (1893), where the revolutionary character of the party was proclaimed, and its aims declared to be the socialization of means of production and the propagation of the idea of the class struggle. Even at this date, however, there were considerable differences in the type of Socialism accepted by different regions in Italy, and the type accepted by the leaders of the Sicilian peasants would almost certainly have been repudiated by Marx himself and the more orthodox followers of his theory. Unfortunately it might also have been repudiated by the Sicilian people themselves had they been in a position to understand it. For the wrongs and abuses from which they were suffering were due to the peculiar conditions of their native island, and were not to be found in the rather foreign encyclopedia of the wrongs of the proletariat. To set Sicilian grievances in a context of Marxian philosophy was to distort their real significance; and if the violence used by simple peasants seeking amelioration of ancient ills was interpreted as a seditious attempt at social revolution (requiring cannons and military for repression), a large part of the blame rested undoubtedly with the official leaders. Honourable and courageous men, many of them sincere idealists ready to face persecution for the sake of their cause, they would have denied with indignation the view that they were exploiting the misery of those they led; and yet to play on the sufferings of the Sicilian people and to use them as tools for the realization of ideas outside the range of their minds was very much like trying to carry through a revolution by deception; and it was (regrettably) the Sicilians who paid the price of the deceit.

The worst evils in the island derived from the survival of feudal ties between peasant and proprietor, from rackrents, and the stranglehold exerted by usury. Besides these there was the question of the locking up of land in large estates, the unfair incidence of heavy commercial taxation, and the harassing effects of the agrarian crisis which had begun about 1887. After the rupture of the commercial treaty with France corn production in the island had seriously diminished, while the price of wine had fallen from 40 to 50 lire per hundred litres to 10 to 20, and the price of sulphur from 112 lire per ton in 1891

to 55 lire in 1894, when it was no longer a profitable industry.⁵⁵ Such facts alone were enough to cause instances of extraordinary hardship and produce riots that were really more in the nature of famine riots than anything else. Certainly they hardly merited the treatment which they received; but Crispi allowed himself to be misled, not only regarding their revolutionary character, but regarding a report that they were receiving secret French and Russian support. He went indeed so far as to believe the story of a secret treaty (*Treaty di Bisacquino*) between the heads of the *Fasci* and a Russian grand duke, while other mischiefmakers induced him to credit information that France was furnishing the peasants with arms and money.⁵⁶ Accordingly, although he issued immediate instructions for the lightening and reform of taxation, it was almost the only systematic effort he made at social relief, and on the 3rd January, 1894, a state of siege was proclaimed in the island. Shortly after forty thousand soldiers were despatched, military tribunals were set up, the workmen's associations were dissolved, Press censorship enforced, the people disarmed, and many of the most prominent leaders sentenced to severe penalties. The same process was repeated when, the news of the Sicilian risings having provoked risings in the Lunigiana, disorders there appeared about to become serious.

These were measures sufficiently extreme to arouse discussion in Parliament, where Crispi was accused of violating the Constitution and of employing dictatorial methods.⁵⁷ Defending himself in a long speech remarkable for its detailed information, he convinced the Camera that his urgent decrees had been justified by the seriousness of events; and the Deputies by 342 votes against 45 could not but approve the policy he had pursued.

Perhaps it was his experience of the Sicilian and Lunigiana risings that made him in this third Ministry desire to limit the spread of Socialism throughout Italy. In October 1894 he dissolved all Socialist societies and associations, while certain Socialist newspapers were prosecuted for the printing of subversive articles. Simultaneously the ringleaders in the Sicilian movement received heavy sentences from the military tribunals appointed to try their case. The country, it seemed,

was coming under the influence of a permanently repressive régime. This was, however, far from being the case. By way of reaction the Liberals showed active sympathy with the Socialists, and the general public, following with unusual interest the details of political trials, registered protest when they considered the sentences passed too heavy. Some of the Socialists already imprisoned were triumphantly elected Members of Parliament, and at the general elections of 1895 the Socialists increased the number of their seats to twelve.⁵⁸ As too the danger of the Sicilian disturbances receded, Crispi also moderated his attitude, and the end of the period showed rather a progress in Liberal thought than any stifling of it.

A great benefit which he conferred on the nation was furthermore the establishment of a balanced budget; for, staunchly defending the work of Sidney Sonnino, he upheld the principle of "crystal clear" finance and induced Parliament to vote the Spartan measures necessary to success.⁵⁹ By February 1894 finances were again in a condition where optimism was possible; and though no one appreciated the new taxation which it was necessary to levy, its effect was somewhat lessened by the fact that the currency was reformed, that confidence seemed restored, and that Italian stock rose on the money market. There was too a relaxation of the tension with France, and an attempt to achieve a colonial and perhaps also a commercial understanding. Relations between the State and the Vatican seemed also to be entering on a more harmonious phase; and Crispi's last Ministry might have ended in general gain to the nation if he had not been disastrously involved in a colonial issue that dragged him to ruin and the country to disaster.

Indeed, his schemes for expansion in Africa and the development of Italian colonization there represented matters on which his ideas diverged more remarkably from his countrymen's than in any other field. Just as in the time of Mancini, colonial schemes were not popular in Italy. Men were too conscious of the need of relieving distress at home to consider spending money on what they considered in their heart of hearts to be simply a species of romantic adventure.⁶⁰ Perhaps in no other large country in Europe was there so little understanding of

the issues—scientific, economic, and political—bound up with colonization. The Italian people in general felt the idea of territories on the Red Sea to be almost a mockery of their difficulties of balancing the Budget, reforming taxation, and providing for the alleviation of long-felt social distress; and apart from this the majority of Deputies in Parliament, still thinking in terms of their Risorgimento traditions, were not familiar with the new ideological background of colonialism in Europe. Crispi was far ahead of them in colonial vision and thought, if only because he had toured different European capitals, talked with other European statesmen, and gradually assimilated their ideas. Where for instance many Deputies were inclined to consider the colonial question from a predominantly moral point of view and inquire first into the justification that existed for assuming possession of the territory of weaker peoples, Crispi was willing to accept prevailing conventions in the matter, taking the standards of nineteenth-century politics at face value, and quite naturally omitting to translate their meaning from the safe realm of national self-interest to the more uncertain one of human and ethical fact. Familiar with the philosophy that had “scrambled for Africa” and set about the partitioning of China, he understood the idea of protection by annexation and held enlightened views on the delimitation of spheres of political influence. Indeed, judged by the principles of his day, his error was to be found less in his philosophy than in his failure to realize the necessity of popularizing it and giving it the fullest possible material support. The disastrous fact was that he failed to estimate the disparity, not only between his ideas and those of the people, but between his vision and Italy’s small resources, which were not such as to stand the strain of grandiose schemes or protracted colonial campaigns.

It would be difficult to define the exact aim of his colonial policy; but it might be divided into two sections, of which the first consisted of diplomatic planning for the future, and the second of practical steps taken in Africa to extend Italy’s territorial possessions round Massaua. With regard to the first he enjoyed considerable success—perhaps because it involved only diplomatic negotiation and imposed but a small strain

on the Treasury. Keenly aware that Italy had lost Tunis through Cairoli's ineptitude, he wanted to safeguard her rights to the acquisition of territory elsewhere and to turn the attention of Italians to the importance of the Tripolitanian coast. He corresponded much with Lord Salisbury on the subject, winning England first to a sympathetic recognition of Italian claims, and finally to an informal understanding that if France changed her protectorate over Tunis into sovereignty, Italy should acquire Tripoli.⁶¹ Furthermore, he even induced Berlin and Vienna to promise their support, and when a momentary chance appeared of a *rapprochement* with France, indicated clearly that he expected French diplomatic assistance should matters reach a decisive stage. In the end nothing was done, because the time was not ripe for the annexation of another Turkish province by a European Power, and because Crispi, reassured by England's obvious goodwill, felt that prudence and a policy of waiting would best serve Italian ends. He had, however, prepared the ground for a later expansion of Italian influence, and the credit due to him in this regard was great. No one else in Italy would at this date have looked so far into the future or shown such quiet consistency of purpose; and these qualities appeared again in his measures for helping small settlements of Italians in the Mediterranean to retain their nationality and diffuse Italian culture. In marked contrast to preceding and succeeding ministries, he grasped the importance of founding Italian schools, and in the firm support he gave Italian education in, for example, Tunis, Egypt, Constantinople, and Salonica introduced a new principle into the Government's oversea activities. Finally, in the late 'eighties and 'nineties he organized Italy's small possessions on the Red Sea into a colony (giving it the name of Eritrea), and shortly after founded yet another colony—Somaliland—notifying to other nations the establishment of an Italian protectorate over the Somaliland coast. Under his rule, in fact, Italy was for the first time in modern history slowly emerging as a colonial power, and it was especially unfortunate that his relations with Abyssinia should have brought about the ruin of so much promising construction.

The second object of his policy however (that of extending

the Italian zone of occupation on the Red Sea), was vitiated almost from the outset both by Parliament's mistrust of all African expeditions and by a fundamental mistake which he made regarding the character of African tribes. For though on his first coming to power a strong majority voted the necessary credits to dispatch an expedition which should demand satisfaction for the massacre of Dogali, it was clear that the greater number of Deputies did not want an extension of their African liabilities. He gained, it is true, a vote of confidence on the Government's policy after a particularly eloquent speech in which he declared that "colonies are a necessity of modern life. We cannot remain inert and do nothing so that other Powers occupy by themselves all the unexplored parts of the world . . . (in doing so) we should be guilty of a great crime towards our country, in that we should forever close roadways to our ships and markets to our products. I say that we are beginning to-day, and that it would be a bad beginning if at the first obstacle we fled from the positions we had occupied. We are at Massaua, and we shall stay there."⁶² But though these arguments made an impression on the Camera, their effect was rather to silence than convince opposition. When General San Marzano had reoccupied and fortified Saati he was abruptly recalled: the Abyssinian Negus John (who had been hovering in the neighbourhood with a hostile army) was allowed to retreat unengaged, and it seemed as if Crispi had resigned himself to extending Italian influence mainly through the intrigues of the dissident native chiefs within the Abyssinian Empire. The most outstanding of these—Menelik, King of Shoa—now in fact offered to assist Italian interests in Abyssinia, and concluded with the Italian Government a treaty of "friendship and alliance," receiving a present of five thousand Remington rifles on a promise that they should not be used against Italian troops.⁶³

Actually, this friendship with the King of Shoa was to be the bane of Italian activities in Africa. It was maintained in the face of repeated warnings from General Baldissera, who, experienced in the politics and character of local chieftains, did his best to show that Menelik was quite unworthy of

trust; it was maintained because Italy's diplomatic representative in Abyssinia (Count Antonelli) was a man of mediocre intelligence and sentimental credulity, who believed that to satisfy the native prince's requests was to bind him to Italy by a chain of gratitude and friendship; it was maintained finally because Menelik was known to be intriguing for the crown of Abyssinia, and because Crispi was ill-informed enough to imagine that as Italy's protégé he would be willing later to accept an Italian protectorate.

Events were soon to disillusion him in this regard. While Menelik was making his final preparations against the Emperor the latter was killed in a battle with the Dervishes, and the King of Shoa was able to seize the throne with relative ease.⁶⁴ Though in these early days he immediately invited the Italians to occupy Asmara and signed with Italy the Treaty of Ucciali (2nd May, 1889), it was soon clear that he had no intention of recognizing any obligation which might interfere with his independence. Those clauses of the Treaty of Ucciali which inconveniently appeared to establish the much-desired Italian protectorate were declared to have been "wrongly interpreted" (the translation was incidentally the work of Menelik's own interpreter), and in the general dispute over terminology which followed⁶⁵ he had little difficulty in evading the engagements which he had implicitly assumed. Nor did he show any lack of diplomatic *savoir-faire* in the matter, tactfully allowing Italy to represent him at the anti-slavery conference in Brussels⁶⁶ and despatching an Abyssinian embassy on a ceremonial visit to Rome, where its compliments to the King of Italy and its references to his "high protection" fostered the illusion that an *entente* might yet be established. In reality the key factor in the situation was that Italy had not the strength to make her protectorate compulsory as France had done in dealing with the Bey of Tunis; and the tergiversations and changes in policy which followed the Camera's reluctance to face African issues encouraged Menelik to believe that he could acknowledge or disown Italian claims as he wished. And he was still further encouraged in this belief by the arrival of French and Russian agents, who proceeded to stir up opposition to Italy's African policy by way of com-

pensation for the annoyance France and Russia felt towards the policy Crispi was pursuing in Europe.⁶⁷ Worst of all, during the period of the di Rudini and Giolitti ministries, the attitude of the Government to African affairs revealed a singular lack of consistency. For while di Rudini tended to abandon friendship with Menelik in favour of understandings with Tigran chiefs, Giolitti (always bored with African questions) wanted simply to chloroform the issue, or, as he himself more graciously expressed it, "establish pacific relations with the whole of Abyssinia and a policy of perfect harmony."⁶⁸

As a result of these divergencies of opinion, Crispi's task on assuming the premiership in 1893 was an extraordinarily difficult one. He was, too, misled by his very ambition for his country and his keen anxiety that she should enjoy the territorial possessions and colonial prestige which so obviously redounded to the glory of England, Holland, and France. An outstanding victory by Colonel Arimondi over a superior force of Dervishes at Agordat seemed to suggest that success would attend the Italian arms if forced to a military solution; and while matters were more or less undecided, new manœuvres on the part of Menelik showed that he meant to proceed actively against the Italian forces. In the military engagements which followed, General Baratieri was able at first to carry away some brilliant (if small) successes. The annexation of Tigre was announced, and Crispi, seeing that his dreams of endowing Italy with an African Empire were at last on the point of realization, was drawn into activities on a far larger scale than he had at first intended, or than he allowed Parliament to know. Perhaps for this reason provisions for the campaign were made on a ridiculously narrow margin, supplies and material were inadequate,⁶⁹ and Crispi himself tried to impress on Baratieri the necessity of a quick and not a protracted series of hostilities. Baratieri was not the man to need such advice. Personally impatient of counsels of restraint, guessing perhaps that he was soon to be superseded, ignorant of the country in which he was conducting operations, he attempted a decisive gesture—and advanced to the disaster of Adowa.

It meant the death, not only of four thousand six hundred

Italian officers and soldiers, but of an idea.⁷⁰ For its announcement brought the African enterprise from the safe periphery of the nation's consciousness to the centre, and at the centre it aroused unequivocal and popular anger. Once the news had been grasped disorders took place in some of the principal cities of Italy; there were cries of "Down with Crispi!" and "Away from Africa!"; and in the general demonstrations which ensued men demanded both the abandonment of Crispi's policy and an immediate release from the liabilities which they considered him to have gratuitously thrust on them. Crispi himself, as a matter of course, fell from power and was repudiated by the Parliament he had once dominated and the nation he had served for over fifty years.

It was a grievous end. For, a man of over eighty, he could not even die. He was condemned to live on and to go back to that life of obscure poverty from which he had once as a Sicilian revolutionary emerged. Popular hatred and spiritual ostracism pursued him; he was the object of unjust and miserable accusations, culminating in the vote of censure passed upon him by the Camera in 1898; he saw his work cancelled and his dream mocked; and at the close he lost gradually and almost completely the use of his sight. And still, incapacitated by drudgery and age, he refused to consider himself vanquished. It did not matter that Italy had abandoned him; he could not abandon Italy; and the burden of his appeals to Parliament, anguished, persistent, imploring, was always the same—the welfare of Italy, the redemption of her prestige. "Your Majesty," he wrote in December 1899, "the century which is drawing to a close gave your dynasty the Kingdom of Italy; the century which begins will endow it with greatness and power." And finally, in bitterness of spirit to his wife: "I do not live, I vegetate. When I am alone, as I often am, my mind is like a storm at sea, on which ideas ride like waves and beat against each other. When I think of what has happened, and that it comes of having served my country, it seems as if I must be dreaming. . . ."

The period which followed his fall was in the nature of an interlude, in which the leit-motifs of one period slowly vanished

from the political score and others of quite a different character gradually made their appearance. The decisive themes were not clearly heard; those that belonged to the Crispi period were repeated *diminuendo* and in a minor key; those that should have given out the values of the new age emerged only fragmentarily. Here and there odd chords were struck that seemed to mark the beginning of a new phase, but they were not accompanied by any new melodic line and seemed to end in a series of rests, from which the rhythm for the next developments emerged doubtfully and with profound hesitation, pausing and returning on itself as if uncertain of the beat. Perhaps this was partly the fault of the conductors, for no one appeared with understanding of the notes or with ability to co-ordinate the playing. The various parties and political groups wandered into the piece at will, challenged attention by sounding their own themes *forte fortissimo* and, ignoring the other instruments in the orchestra, reduced its effect to one of general noise. In this blur it was useless to expect discrimination, harmony or balance. The most one could hope was that everyone would survive, and Lefts, Rights, and Centres find some kind of unison at the end. In point of fact they did so; but their performance in the meantime inspired the public chiefly with misgiving and made it wonder if after all the entertainment were quite worth the heavy price that was being asked for it.

The first to take up the baton that Crispi had let fall was the Marquis di Rudini. The King would undoubtedly have preferred someone else; but, looking for a statesman, he found only politicians of secondary worth, and after vainly offering the premiership to Saracco and Ricotti he had no other choice. Di Rudini was not fitted to deal with the aftermath of Adowa. He had always upheld a "stay-at-home" philosophy, and had been amongst those who regarded expansion as a form of luxury which Italy was too poor to afford. He now surveyed the debris of Crispi's plans and decided hastily on the complete abandonment.⁷¹ Negotiations were opened with Menelik in order to establish peace as quickly as possible, the restoration of the province of Tigre was announced with flourish of relief, and there was something like a form

renunciation of the terms of the protectorate over Abyssinia. These things certainly met with popular approval.⁷² The war had been unwillingly begun, and the nation showed clearly that it wanted nothing so much as its end. And yet a far-seeing politician would not have submitted to popular clamour without first analysing its ingredients; and if in this case di Rudini had analysed them, he might have perceived that his policy was superficially satisfactory but profoundly misjudged. For it was evident that the people were suffering from the effects of severe strain and shock following on a period of prolonged depression. It was evident that they were ready to accept humiliation because acceptance of humiliation seemed to have been the law of their existence of the last twenty years: that they were, in short, defeatist because defeatism had been instilled into them by a series of political leaders. To accept their philosophy of failure, and perpetuate it by concluding a particularly humiliating peace with the Negus was to poison the wound Fortune had inflicted. Possessed as he was of considerable historical culture, di Rudini might in fact profitably have reflected on the precedent of Cannae—that disaster after which the Roman Senate had thanked their general because “he had not despaired of the Republic.” It was not enough that Baldissera and his men in Africa showed unswerving courage in relieving Adigrat and retreating to the Belesa-Muna-Hareb line; the memory of Adowa—felt as an unredeemed disgrace—was handed on from generation to generation and became gradually almost a stain on Italy’s honour—a great occasion on which the nation felt that it had somehow been less than itself.

Unfortunately, too, di Rudini’s internal policy was to be no more successful than his handling of colonial affairs. Remembering that he owed his power to the complaisance of the Extreme Left, he tried to follow a *laissez-faire, laissez-passer* formula, and from defending a Liberal attitude gradually drifted into meek passivity.⁷³ Radical and Republican propaganda was not checked when it became subversive; a series of agitations were allowed to produce dangerous feeling among the masses; and when an economic crisis suddenly supplied the match for an explosion the Government was too

ignorant of the situation to know how it might best be brought under control. Di Rudini (himself a Conservative and member of the old Right) was persuaded into proclaiming a state of siege in several of the larger cities, and even into allowing cannons and cavalry to be used by the authorities in Milan.

To a certain extent his action was justified. These "May disorders" were the worst the kingdom had known since its foundation. They had begun in the South, where unemployment, a low rate of wages, and a sudden rise in the price of bread had again brought about starvation conditions, and they had spread rapidly towards the North, where they had added new fuel to the already existing political discontent.⁷⁴ But the strength of both movements might have been sapped if they had been taken at an early stage and divided. Had, for instance the peasants of the South been helped by economic relief measures, and demonstrations in the North been tactfully dispersed, matters might not have reached the point of bloodshed. Instead, however, the Government even at this stage let slip the chance of conciliation, and finally struck with violence that almost inevitably provoked resistance from the crowds. Barricades were erected in Milan, shops and houses were sacked in Florence, riots were carried out in Naples and when finally peace was restored, in Milan alone over four hundred among the civilian population were reported as killed or wounded. Losses among the soldiers and the police were notably less; and intense indignation was felt over the exaggerated attitude adopted by the Conservatives, who declared that the life of the State had been endangered and hailed the army as miraculous saviours of society. Still more feeling was moreover excited by an ill-judged action of the King's.⁷⁵ For urged on by his advisers, he conferred upon the general commanding at Milan (Bava-Beccaris) the Grand Cross of the military order of Savoy, congratulating him on the great service he had rendered to the State and civilization—a service which, honestly analysed, consisted in successfully firing upon unarmed crowds with the loss of only two men.

Though the prisons were filled with political offenders though newspapers were censored and free expression of

opinion generally prevented, it was impossible after these events to stifle the country's unrest. In a subterranean fashion it even gained ground, while a wind of unpopularity began blowing towards the monarchy, the Government, and even civil institutions.⁷⁶ Perhaps this wind explained, if it did not excuse, the character of the following period. For di Rudini was succeeded by General Pelloux, and Pelloux was the embodiment of reaction. Devoted to the person of his Sovereign, he cared more for the monarchy than for the Constitution and was quite unscrupulous over maintaining himself in power so long as he thought his rigorous measures helpful to the cause he served. "He combines," remarked a contemporary, "the obstinacy of a peasant with the authoritarianism and limited mentality of the barracks-room." And if the description were a little harsh, at least it implied the type of policy Pelloux was to try and enact.⁷⁷ His period was, in fact, the worst period in Italy's parliamentary life—a period in which extra-parliamentary crises were made the excuse for a reshuffling of ministries, in which the authority of the Camera was flouted, and its legislative power set aside.

He began moderately. A Left Cabinet was formed, and some mention was made of financial and taxation reform. It was only in February 1899 that he revealed his true purpose by presenting a series of "Exceptional Laws" and trying at any cost to secure their passage through the House.⁷⁸ They were extremely repressive measures. They reintroduced the practice of sending political offenders to penal settlements: they established a great measure of control over the Press: they gave State authorities large powers to prevent or forbid the holding of public meetings: and they put the employees of the Public Service under almost military discipline. Though a first reading of them did not arouse convinced opposition, the case was abruptly altered when Pelloux thought the time had come to drop his Left supporters and form a Cabinet from the Right. Suspicious and uneasy, the majority of the Camera expressed their anger at his procedure and began a process of systematic opposition to his government. The Extreme Left (*Estrema*) particularly, forgot its differences in order to achieve disciplined collaboration, and succeeded so well that it began a

manœuvre that became famous in the life of the Camera. "Obstructionism" had not before been tried in Italy, and would probably under normal circumstances have been a failure.⁷⁹ Roused by Pelloux's methods, however, the Deputies of the "popular" parties resisted any attempt to break up their solidarity, and for two years stubbornly refused to yield to the Government's demands. They were supported by a large section of the Moderate Left and by public opinion outside Parliament. For when Pelloux found it hopeless to get his laws accepted and turned to a General Election, the country returned thirty more Extreme Left Deputies, despite unscrupulous "official management" of the elections and a large amount of Government coercion. Pelloux had to hand in his resignation, and a new spirit seemed at last to have emerged both in Italy as a whole and in Montecitorio.

Probably Pelloux himself and even the Court circle which supported him would have found it difficult to state why they attached so much importance to the repressive measures. Once the May disturbances were passed the country was really in a weary mood, anxious only for peace and quiet. Public order was not menaced, and the need of an autocratic régime (if the need had ever existed) was certainly at an end. But it was less the facts of the situation that alarmed Conservatives than the mental state which they knew to exist in the people. It was clear that many men felt bewildered and confused by the events they had witnessed in public life, and it was also clear that they were hoping for a renovation of old ideas and institutions. Politics and political philosophy seemed in a state of flux, and even so enlightened a thinker as Sonnino tended to respond to the uncertainty he saw around him by turning to the example of the past and advocating a reaffirmation of its principles. He would in fact have gone back to the oldest interpretation of the Constitution, abolishing the practice by which ministers were chosen by the Camera and making them ministers of the Sovereign—a change which (he hoped) would create a stable and strong Executive.⁸⁰ It was a retrogressive idea that would probably have failed even without the Camera's resistance to Pelloux's attacks. And indeed the Premier chosen to succeed him showed that the King himself wished to give

the country time to pause and reflect before further confusion developed. A dignified, kindly man of over eighty, Saracco was clearly an "interim" premier, from whom only loyalty to his immediate tasks and sound government were to be expected. Actually circumstances were to demand more of him. For on the 29th July, 1900, the King was assassinated by an anarchist, and the need arose of maintaining calm in the midst of general indignation. Saracco was equal to the emergency; and with the Socialists, Radicals, and even Republicans offering their most sincere support the State passed serenely from the reign of Umberto I to that of Vittorio-Emanuele III. "The crime has robbed a King of a few years of life and added centuries to that of the monarchy," said a Republican philosopher. And indeed men forgot the ill done by Umberto's advisers to regret the loss of his courageous and generous personality. Perhaps even the reactionaries saw the irony of the fact that the assassin had been moved to murder the King by indignation at the honours which Umberto—on their advice—had shown the general commanding at Milan; in any event, the new Prince showed that he was a man of modern ideas, and that the era of reactionary intrigues was at an end. Saracco was re-confirmed in office, government proceeded along normal lines, and it was only when an adverse note brought about the Cabinet's fall that parliamentary government seemed about to enter on a new and different phase.

“ZANARDELLI AND THE ‘LIBERAL SPRING’ ”

THE fall of Saracco left an ambiguous parliamentary situation. For the vote which had defeated him represented a temporary coalition of Left-Right interests and suggested no real direction for the future. To summon Saracco again was to prolong a period of transition that had already lasted too long; to summon Sonnino was to please the Conservative majority in Parliament, but vitally offend the country; to summon Zanardelli was to risk a Liberal régime and a drastic reduction of military expense.¹ In the end the King decided in favour of Zanardelli. It was a choice that created some surprise. Men had expected Sonnino. But they underestimated both the King's intelligence and his characteristic leaning to tolerance. He was prepared to try the experiment of a Zanardelli government because he saw—what many of his advisers were too old and prejudiced to see—that a new social force was rising in the country, and if it were not to become dangerous must be given some expression in Parliament.² In Zanardelli's hands this tendency towards a new political democracy would be allowed reasonably free development, while its revolutionary aspects would be deprived of their chief *raison d'être*. Besides, the King was aware that more could be gained by making a bargain with a popular ministry than by blindly supporting an unpopular one. Zanardelli was not allowed to form his ministry unconditionally. It was understood that in foreign affairs the Cabinet was to follow the same general policy as Visconti Venosta; that San Martino and Morin were to remain as Ministers of War and Marine; and that there was to be no cut in the budget for military affairs.³ These demands were unusual in a constitutional régime, but they were not harsh. Zanardelli may well have thought it worth while to comply with them for the sake of the work which lay nearest his heart—the work, that is to say, of bringing about a Liberal restoration. It was unfortunately as a “restoration” that he

conceived his Liberalism, and not as an innovation—and the fact was symptomatic of a fundamental weakness in his philosophy.⁴ Personally a man of unswerving honesty, he had several times renounced power for the sake of his political convictions. Indeed, his steadfastness of mind and his constancy of opinion had gained him the respect of the Camera. Probably no other Deputy could boast so wide a literary and political culture or so honourable a record in political life. Generous, impulsive, capable of violent storms of feeling, he was incapable either of bearing a grudge or seeking to revenge the injuries he received, and with his antecedents and character seemed exactly fitted to extract the best from the new situation. It was a real misfortune that his Liberalism belonged to a school that was now thought out of date, a school derived rather from the ideology of *Risorgimento* than from the ideology of the twentieth century, remote from the new conditions of modern industrial life. Excellent as his ideas often were, they tended to be doctrinaire and limited in relation to the widening horizon of society. In some respects far ahead of his environment, he was in other respects far behind it. While he was prepared to fight staunchly for the principle of divorce, and fight for it against an entrenched mass of popular and clerical prejudice, he was vague in regard to the questions of working-class emancipation and reform. His training had not perhaps been such as to make him understand them. He had known Liberalism as a great historical force which, centred in a small minority, had freed a passive majority from alien and ecclesiastical domination—and freed it in its own despite. He had seen this force, established as a government, fighting popular ignorance no less than bourgeois egoism and carrying through its reform measures, not merely without the support of public opinion, but very often in the teeth of its disapproval. What section of the Italian masses had wanted the abolition of the death penalty, or an enlightened reform of the penal code, or compulsory education, or (against all Roman Catholic tradition) the secularization of charity institutions, the emancipation of public instruction from clerical control, and the placing of clergy and citizens on a footing of equality before the law? It was in terms of this experience

that, at the time of the reform of the franchise, he had wanted to widen the electorate but withhold universal suffrage.⁵ Universal suffrage in Italy meant, he thought, giving power to masses whose social conditions made them essentially reactionary in outlook. Besides, he was frankly suspicious of a régime that sought to establish political equality on a quantitative basis, regardless of environment and historical conditions. From this point of view, Rousseau's doctrines as applied to Italy seemed to him to mean the "despotism of the majority"—and if the majority were priest-ridden, backward, and crushed by poverty, what was to be hoped from its despotism? He wanted government *for* the people; he doubted very much if in Italy of 1901 government *by* the people were the same thing, or even the best means of securing it. Moreover, the principle for which he really cared—cared passionately and devotedly—was that of liberty; liberty of thought and speech and existence within the context of a *laissez-faire* modern State, interfering as little as possible in general life and remaining neutral before the clash of opposing interests, unless (as in the case of ecclesiastical privilege) they threatened to encroach on the equilibrium of freedom, or as in the case of class pretensions (whether working class or bourgeoisie) they resulted in continuous and harmful disorder.

It was a philosophy that obviously had many merits. But it was more adapted to conserving a liberal régime than to establishing one, and it offered small hope of social advance in a period when a rapidly changing material environment required new social consideration. Above all it did not seem likely to command much general support, since *a priori* it was a philosophy that aimed at reform carried out from above. Still, Zanardelli began by showing his goodwill towards those with more radical views than himself. He tried to obtain the direct political co-operation of the *Estrema*, and he invited such leaders as Marcora and Sacchi to form part of his Cabinet.⁶ They refused. Marcora, who was a Republican, felt that he could not with consistency enter the Government: Sacchi had made so many extreme promises that he could not accept a moderate programme without losing public countenance. Both knew that for reasons of parliamentary strategy the *Estrema*

was willing to vote for Zanardelli; but they knew also that it did not want to be compromised by a pledge of open support; and above all that it did not want to be tied to a complaisant rôle. With the dissidence in the Socialist groups increasing day by day, with Ferri opposing Turati, no one quite knew where their allegiance would be due next. Hence the most convenient attitude to adopt towards Zanardelli seemed to be one of benevolent but watchful neutrality. To have said so frankly would have been to clear the situation; but the two leaders chose instead to make a pretext of the question of military expense. Asking of Zanardelli a promise to restrict military expenditure to a sum not exceeding 239 million lire (a promise which they must have known he could not give), they broke off negotiations with popular éclat and a general flavour of sacrifice.⁷

Their withdrawal meant that Zanardelli had to turn to the Right. Here he found Giusso, Prinetti, and de Broglio—the first an independent Southerner hating oppression of any kind; the second a sincere and intelligent Conservative, but lacking talent for the folio assigned him (Foreign Affairs); the last a man of mediocre gifts substituted at the Treasury for Wollemborg because Giolitti happened to dislike his rival.⁸ The substitution was a great mistake. De Broglio, as Lodi wrote later, was simply a "good accountant"; Wollemborg had both a flair for finance and a courageous mind.⁹ Given a position of responsibility he might have done much, but Zanardelli yielded to Giolitti in the matter for the same reason that he felt obliged to yield him the Ministry of the Interior. Giolitti had been increasing his influence in Parliament ever since his return, and now occupied a position where he could not be put aside. Differences of temperament and character and opinion made collaboration between the two men difficult; circumstances made it essential if Liberal government were really to be tried.

In a general way the public hoped much from Zanardelli's régime. Without stopping to analyse the situation with which he was confronted, or the handicaps which *a priori* crippled his work, they were pleased that a man of his repute and character should be Premier. So keen a Liberal critic as

Papafava wrote that "the ferment of Spring is at work in our political life. We follow the proceedings of the Ministry and the Chamber with unwonted interest, which is no longer due to mere curiosity but to the knowledge that great issues concerning the well-being of the nation are at stake. Indifference and scepticism are out of fashion. The public is aware that a breath of new life has at last penetrated the Chamber."¹⁰ And yet within a year the same critic was recording his disillusionment and almost his despair over the whole trend of the political situation. "My belief in the honesty and good faith of the Ministry has been very shaken. . . . I should say to the sceptics—pardon me, you were right; I was a fool . . ."¹¹ And he quoted the opinion of others more destructive than himself—"This Ministry of betrayal . . ."¹² Nor was this bitterness merely individual. It reflected a general state of mind and a definite current of public opinion. As people had not understood Zanardelli's difficulties, so they did not understand his failure—which, *inter alia*, was hardly his fault. It was indeed no one's fault in particular, but simply the logic of history which had put him in power at a time when circumstances were against his government. For in the first place the Parliament which was presumably to support him was still the Parliament elected by Pellouxian methods;¹³ it represented a strong Conservative bloc momentarily divided, but liable to reunite at any moment on a positive issue of reform. Zanardelli could not rely on it to accept his measures, nor expect it to give him any help in achieving a Liberal programme.¹⁴ From the beginning his Cabinet was on sufferance, allowed to live partly because his adversaries feared the unpopularity which would certainly surround those who brought about its fall, partly because they were reluctant openly to oppose the King's choice, and most of all because they dreaded the creation of a Ministry under Sonnino.¹⁵ The truth was that even at this date a Liberal "party" did not exist in Italy. There were Liberal tendencies in nearly all parties; there were isolated individuals who typified Liberal thought; but there was no compact and organized group of men united by the principles of a common doctrine.¹⁶ Even the *Estrema*, which had shown itself so vigorous in the work

of obstruction, had not been able to hold together once its negative inspiration had gone, and beginning with a series of internal dissensions had rapidly passed to a series of bitter dissensions with the Radicals. It lacked in any case the ability to draw new conclusions from new facts, and while it weakened the Liberal forces of progress by its secession it offered no constructive alternative in itself. So far as Parliament was concerned, therefore, democracy seemed as remote from understanding what it wanted as it had been in the preceding century, and a necessary previous condition of the work Zanardelli had in mind would have been the creation and organization of a new democratic party. Zanardelli himself felt this. He actually spoke of constituting such a party, but by ill-luck, although he had the breadth of mind necessary to formulate the conception, he had not the right personality to actuate it.¹⁷ Profoundly honest, he had a profound distaste for intrigue and compromise; sincerely tolerant, he did not understand dogmatic prejudice or the necessity of reconciling small minds to generous ideas. Moreover, his Liberalism not only lacked a modern inspiration; it lacked competent technical advisers who, in the field of economics no less than social organization, could supply him with expert knowledge of what circumstances required. Lastly, he suffered from inherited handicaps produced by circumstances over which he had no control—namely, the defeatism and scepticism which preceding governments had fixed in the public mind. So soon as he received his first set-backs in reform, so soon as the parliamentary situation imposed on him a whittling down of these promises and principles which he had in all sincerity sworn to defend, the public thought it recognized the familiar game of deception and inaction, and decided that his government was as little worthy of respect and support as the preceding governments which had betrayed its trust. It watched—with passive and unbelieving detachment—while Zanardelli struggled heroically against petty misunderstandings, against exaggerated Socialist pretensions, and irremovable Conservative interests. And watching in this spirit, it missed not only the nobility of the man, but the generous and disinterested quality which kept him at his post when unpopularity and

unjust reproach, when mental fatigue and physical suffering must have made him long for nothing so much as its resignation. For in addition to his other difficulties he became seriously ill in the course of his ministry. And here too he was handicapped by the history of his predecessors. How many times had not Depretis been "ill" on the eve of a political crisis? How many times had not his pathetic references to his attacks of gout caused good-humoured laughter in the Camera? And was Zanardelli's suffering—a suffering that apparently the doctors could neither diagnose nor cure—to be taken more seriously? Three years later it appeared that it was; that, indeed, inability to diagnose cancer of the stomach did not mitigate its effects on the patient; but in the interim the matter remained the object of polite incredulity, certainly without power to win Zanardelli the extra goodwill he required.

On assuming office he was really confronted with two main tasks: first, to prove that public order could be maintained without repressive laws; second, to initiate a reform of the taxation system which should make it less outstandingly unjust.¹⁸ With regard to the first, he said at once in his official speech to Parliament that the Government's first care would be to maintain the principles of liberty with "scrupulous devotion."¹⁹ With regard to the second, he promised that his ministry would try to redistribute the taxes more equally, and at the same time improve the moral and material conditions of the poorer classes. His government was, in short, to be a government of "liberty within the law" and of "progressive and efficacious reforms."

A beginning was made in the sphere of taxation, where Wollemborg was encouraged to draft a reform lightening one of the most oppressive of all fiscal measures—the tax on flour. It was on the whole a modest proposal (in view of Zanardelli's precarious parliamentary position it could be nothing else) but it was perhaps rather crudely formulated. It aimed at relieving the poor by removing from them the worst burden of indirect taxation and increasing the direct taxation of the well-to-do.²⁰ It meant, in short, a readjustment of the fiscal structure which would almost certainly disturb the country's general economic equilibrium. Apart from this, however, the

details of the scheme probably represented the minimum of social and financial justice, and the outcry it produced in the Camera was far from being justified by its defects. But the deputies, in accordance with their usual habit of assessing the importance of reforms in terms of the political importance to those who were to benefit from them, felt it more necessary to defend the financial interests of the bourgeoisie than struggle for a class that was as yet hardly self-conscious. They rejected the Bill uncompromisingly, and Wollemborg was put to drafting another. His second effort met with no better fate than the first, and he resigned. His successor (Carcano) showed more tact. He discovered that nothing could be done until the whole matter had been thoroughly investigated and studied;²¹ and he continued to study peacefully and gracefully while the Camera turned its attention to other issues, while the public found a new source of agitation, and the taxpayer, forgetting the gleam of hope that had appeared on his horizon, sank back into the apathy from which he had been aroused. Then Carcano produced a suitably circumscribed proposal for removing the tax on flour, saw it pass the Camera without difficulty, and discreetly relegated other proposals for taxation reform to the shelves on which they normally reposed. Indeed, examining the situation coldly and mathematically, what could be done? A radical reform of the taxes meant a loss to the Treasury of millions; and if the bourgeoisie refused to accept any responsibility for them, how were they to be made up? The obvious answer was by drastically cutting military expenditure and retrenching the Budget for War and Marine; but then the Government had given an undertaking on this point, and in fact in April, May, and June the Camera approved a Bill for an extraordinary expenditure of 32 millions on military affairs and agreed to fix the Budget for Marine at 121 millions for six years, and that of War at 259 millions.²² And, as we have seen, given the state of Europe these provisions for armaments were neither excessive nor unnecessary. Italy could not internationally do with less; the tragic point was that internally she could hardly support even these.

And inevitably the contrast between the absence of reform and the new expenditure attracted scathing comment. "Neither

Pelloux nor Saracco," wrote one publicist, "dared increase military expenditure, because the Left would have voted against them. But behold! the Left concedes to Zanardelli what it would have denied Pelloux and Saracco. . . . In this way the Conservatives have the bone of military expenditure and the Democrats have the shadow of a reform . . . that will not be actuated."²³ And it was useless to point out that such reproaches were unjust; that the Liberals in Parliament had received as little support from the outside public as they had received from the Conservative deputies. Actually this was the real cause of Zanardelli's failure. Had the issue been made a popular one, had there been a great expression of popular feeling and a series of well-organized agitations, Zanardelli might after all have been able to bring the necessary pressure to bear on the Conservatives. But the majority of citizens simply did not think it worth while to protest. What was offered was so little in comparison with what they needed that it did not arouse them from their indifference. No committees were formed to encourage or help in the campaign to reform taxation.²⁴ The democratic Press defended Wollemborg's measure sceptically, and often almost disdainfully; a large part of the public (with the cynicism of past experience) remarked that the question had been raised only in order to achieve office; others serenely aided the Conservatives by ridiculing any practical attempt at putting Liberal measures into practice. Above and beyond everything people were interested in the new outbreak of strikes—strikes which provided them with a subject of discussion as exciting as the subject of taxation was dull. The Great Conflict between Capital and Labour, as it was called, had dramatic interest; the problematical removal of minor taxation was, from the point of view of the educated bourgeoisie, a prosaic and even abstract affair. Nor were the Socialists concerned to make it otherwise. They avoided sounding the humanitarian note in the matter, because they too were preoccupied with the strikes, because more especially they did not want to bring about the fall of Zanardelli's Government.²⁵ From their point of view the situation could in fact be briefly summarized as follows: given the strength of Opposition in Parliament, Zanardelli could not force through

a fiscal reform; to compel him to attempt it would be to ruin his ministry; to ruin his ministry would be to put an end to the most generous and *laissez-faire* policy yet applied to working-men's associations. And for the same reason they did not want to insist on the issue by encouraging popular demonstrations. The strikes were clearly more important, and in the long run likely to achieve wider results.

The epidemic of strikes which occurred about this time was indeed a political phenomenon so widespread and prolonged as to dwarf the importance of every other question. The epidemic was not (as certain Conservatives hastened to suggest) due simply to the Liberal attitude of the Government nor to the political propaganda of the Socialists. At the root of the matter was the plain truth that whereas the material condition of Italy had greatly improved in the last four years, the improvement had been almost wholly to the advantage of the propertied classes and almost entirely without benefit to the workers.²⁶ Though exports and imports had increased, though industry had expanded and agriculture greatly developed, wages had not gone up, and—if one considered the increased price of bread and flour, had even gone down.²⁷ And this was especially the case in the country, where in 1901 the earnings of a peasant reached the miserable figure of 400 lire a year.²⁸ That the workers should sooner or later demand an improvement in their condition was almost inevitable; and indeed the most cursory survey of the strikes from 1860 to 1899 showed the gathering storm of protest.

1860-69: Number of strikes	132
1870-79: Number of strikes	553
1880-89: Number of strikes	752
1890-99: Number of strikes	1,698 ²⁹

And following on this the year 1901 showed a climax, since in this year alone the number of strikes reached the figure of 1,400, some of them occurring with such interrelated rapidity that in one period there were over two hundred strikes a day. Nor were they limited to industrial workers; protests from factory workers were followed by protests from seamen, from agricultural labourers, from almost every variety of employee;

and once the people saw that when they organized protests Carabinieri and soldiers were no longer sent against them, they gained faith not only in their power of organization, but in the number of demands they might make.³⁰ Whence almost automatically the more strikes were settled, the more strikes occurred.

It was a difficult situation to handle wisely—above all, because a section of the Socialists contributed by inflammatory speeches to the alarm it inspired. So, for instance, on 2nd February, 1902, Turati, addressing recalcitrant railwaymen at Geneva, said that “the peasants, who represent our bread—the workmen, who represent industrial prosperity—the railwaymen, the porters, the seamen . . . have come together. The cycle is closed. Do you not see the new Continent which is emerging from the depths of history? The words of Karl Marx have become reality—‘workers of the world unite!’” Declamations of this kind, without helping the workers, simply added to the Government’s difficulties. On 14th–15th February the *Corriere della Sera* repeated Turati’s phrase that “the cycle has closed,” and added “the strikes of peasants, workers, and railwaymen threaten the three sources of prosperity: agriculture, industry, and commerce. . . . There is a tendency to subject the great services of the State to the Extreme Parties.” In the face of this feeling it was useless for such intelligent and realist Socialists as Barzilai to analyse the situation impartially. Actually Barzilai was right when he said that in essentials the problem called not so much for police or legislation as education—education both of the Conservatives and the workers. The Conservatives because they must learn that new times demanded new duties and new sacrifices from the well-to-do; the workers because they must learn how to use the liberty they had acquired (liberty to strike and form associations), liberty for which Italian conditions had given them no historical training.³¹ His analysis might in fact have been carried further. It might have been added that so long as both parties continued to take advantage of their position no solution could be forthcoming, and that the continued deadlock in the State was likely only to harm the forces of enlightened Liberalism. But this analysis—like Bar

zilai's dictum that the real crisis from which the country was suffering was a crisis of ideals—was too abstract to find favour in an atmosphere where daily news of workers' agitations created not only nervousness but something like downright panic. Even so rational and balanced a Liberal as Fortunato could not conceal his concern over the direction of events or the spirit they seemed to express in the country. "Must Italy," he asked himself, "struggle, as in the fifteenth century, between reaction and anarchy?"³² Was the triumph of Liberalism over the authoritarianism of Pelloux to result only in social disturbance? Did the sincere recognition of public liberty mean only liberty for disorder and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship? (For to Fortunato the fact of dictatorship was more significant than its descriptive label.) And he went on to discuss the infectious restlessness, the nervous irascibility which seemed to have become a phenomenon of the times in Italy. There was, he found, no country in Europe more liable to social convulsions—convulsions due essentially to an unhealthy state of the body politic. "Where else is there a greater ferment of social antithesis and hatreds, a greater ferment of rebellion, and a smaller spirit of resistance? (It is said that) 'the country prospers . . . the kingdom is tranquil . . . the patria firmly united . . .' Alas! if only people would try and descend to reality . . . if only they knew the state of war and suspicion which rules in Italy . . . and which suggests that . . . sooner or later . . . we shall finish in a continual state of feverish agitations. . . . Everyone puts the responsibility on the Government . . . there is no one who does not proclaim himself the victim of an intolerable state of affairs—no one who is not, moreover, convinced that the Government is actuated not by a wish to do justice, but only by a sentiment of fear . . . and that the way to obtain something from it is to impose one's will and exercise superior power."³³ And if these were the forebodings of Fortunato, it can be imagined what were the forebodings of the average bourgeois. In a general way the strikes were regarded not as the economic protest which under the circumstances they really were, but as a prelude to a radical revolution and an overturning of the very bases of society. The scupulous neutrality which Zanar-

delli and Giolitti maintained before the conflicts of workers and employers was labelled weakness if not cowardice; and in both the Senate and the Camera the Government was severely censured for its failure to intervene and restore order. In the Senate it was accused of "yielding to the piazza" and not defending established rights with the energy they merited.³⁴ The Senator Arrivabene remarked that the wish of the working classes for an improvement in their position resembled the appetite of Dante's wolf—the wolf that after it had eaten a meal was simply more hungry than before.³⁵ Vitelleschi said that unrestricted liberty of right to strike constituted a grave danger to the economic welfare of the country;³⁶ in short, the Senate showed itself hostile to the whole Giolitti-Zanardelli policy, and Giolitti was called on to defend it with extraordinary force, both on this occasion and a few months later, when the attack spread to the Camera and no less a personality than Sonnino stated the case for the Conservative Opposition. In reply Giolitti used chiefly the argument that since the right of association was recognized by law the Government could not legally resort to force to suppress it. The Government, he added, had only two duties: (1) to protect liberty of work; (2) to maintain public order.³⁷ Later, elaborating his argument, he pointed out that nothing existed in Italy to forbid a strike; moreover, to proclaim the annulment of the existing law, or the institution of a state of siege, would be to provoke worse disorders than those which had followed the repressions of 1898. "If you do not wish to follow the path of reaction, it is necessary to take other steps—it is necessary, that is to say, to re-evoke the affection of the lower classes for our institutions. . . . This is the thesis which I sustain: in the midst of a thousand difficulties we are trying to demonstrate to the people, not with words but with facts, that within our institutions all progress and all liberty is possible. . . . It is my profound conviction that Socialism is to be fought only on the field of liberty."³⁸ Supported by Orlando, who made a vivid speech in defence of Government neutrality,³⁹ supported also by Badaloni, who remarked ironically that he perceived no movement to declare the employers' associations illegal, the Government received a favourable vote in the Camera,

which rejected by 264 votes to 184 an order of the day opposing Giolitti's policy.

But this apparent lull in the agitation was far from being its end. Just as the situation appeared to be resolving into some sort of harmony there occurred the worst blow of all—the strike on the part of the railwaymen. No strike could have had better historical grounds. As early as 1896 a Royal Commission, presided over by the Senator Gagliardo, had investigated the treatment given their employees by the railway companies and declared it definitely unjust.⁴⁰ A list had been made of the various ways in which the companies had defaulted on their obligations, and recommendations had been made for a fair adjustment of the employees' claims. But successive Governments had ignored both the Commission's Report and its suggestions. Some Cabinets had not wished to understand the problem; others, though they had the desire to do so, had not had the necessary strength.⁴¹ Accordingly, matters had been allowed to drift, and the agitation which the workers were now making was only the logical result of six years of general inertia. In this case, as in the case of taxation, the Liberals were being called on to liquidate a debt created by the heedlessness of their predecessors; and in this case, too, their inability to solve satisfactorily a problem which they had inherited was counted against them as a fault in their philosophy and its application.

Actually it was one thing to analyse the abstract rights and wrongs of the matter, another to estimate its political significance at a moment when the general public was in a state of fear, when the Government had only a short time before been compelled to substitute soldiers for the gaswork employees in Turin, and when even acute observers had lost a due sense of reality. Given the psychological background it was not possible to allow the strike to take place and disrupt the chief means of communication without inviting disaster. And the Cabinet, after some wavering, proceeded to guarantee the functioning of the service by calling out reserves and militarizing the railways.⁴² In the meantime it invited the workers to express their grievances in Rome and strove to settle the question peaceably. The militarization was defended by

Giolitti on special grounds and was declared to be consistent with his theory of liberty within the law because, strictly speaking, employees in the public service did not enjoy the right to strike.⁴³ Apart from that, the Ministry showed its goodwill towards the workers' cause by a solemn promise to better their conditions.⁴⁴ This was in itself well enough; but it was simply cutting the Gordian knot without in the least untying it. The obligation to fulfil their contracts rested with the railway companies which had signed and undertaken them; if money had to be disbursed over the affair, it should clearly have been the companies' money, since it was essentially they who were at fault. But instead, when the issue was finally settled it was the State that assumed the chief liability of improvement, and the Public Treasury that was pledged to pay a sum of over 14 millions in three years for the benefit of the railway companies' employees.⁴⁵ Under the circumstances perhaps it was not surprising that many of the Liberals felt as bitterly towards the settlement as the Conservatives themselves.⁴⁶ The Cabinet was considered simply to have paid the price of peace and to have protected vested interests at the expense of State and workers. Yet what was Zanardelli to do? He knew that the grievances of the men were just, and that they must be redressed: he was afraid to let the matter come before a court of law, because it was quite possible either that the companies would win on a technicality (which would have produced something not far short of a popular uprising), or that they would be found in the wrong and ordered to pay the arrears of the workers' salaries—arrears which, since they would have had to cover a period of three years, would have reached an enormous figure quite beyond the companies' resources.⁴⁷ On the other hand, assuming that the matter were kept outside the courts, he could not allow anarchy in the public service while workmen and employees fought out their differences. To make the State pay was humiliating and exasperating, and in principle entirely wrong. In practice it was perhaps the only way to secure a measure of economic justice while avoiding repression. And it was precisely repression that he was at all costs determined to avoid. For indeed, at the very height of conservative protest against the strikes, he had

publicly reaffirmed his faith in the principles of liberty. “It is true,” he had said, “that there are many inconveniences in a régime of liberty: it is true that there are cruel anxieties, especially for those who have the responsibility of government: that there are even perhaps times of insurrection, of conflict and misfortune. And we know from history the sad alternatives of revolution and reaction, the extreme sacrifices of blood and the hardships, the humiliating phases of weariness and corruption which have been necessary in all nations in order that liberty should triumph. But even faced with these calamities, with these dangers, there will never come a day that I shall not say ‘*male periculosam liberatem*’: I prefer the dangers of liberty—of liberty which raises individuals as it raises peoples, and which can alone inspire the virtue and power for great things . . .”⁴⁸

These were lofty principles, and they were typical of Zanardelli’s philosophy. But they did not prevent the settlement of the strike weakening the Cabinet.⁴⁹ And it was weakened still further shortly after by Zanardelli’s attitude to a Bill on divorce.⁵⁰ It was not, he felt, enough that the Bill should be presented by a parliamentary Commission; in strict consistency a Liberal Government should assume the responsibility for so essentially Liberal a measure and present a Bill of its own. His ministers did not share his views. Giusso (offended in his religious feelings) resigned, while general discord appeared in the Cabinet, and Giolitti said frankly that reasons of political expediency alone would forbid his supporting such a law. “Personally speaking, I would vote a hundred divorces; but as a member of the Government, I must take account of the agitation it will raise in the country.” And in point of fact the opposition excited by the mere idea of the Bill was so strong that it had to be dropped; though not before it had rendered Zanardelli’s Government the object of extreme clerical and orthodox hostility.

Nor, unfortunately, could the Cabinet regain much of the popularity it had lost by social legislation. It is true that in June 1902 a special Ufficio del Lavoro was created for the purpose of supervising and enforcing the application of laws on industrial work,⁵¹ and it was a bureau greatly needed. For

where France had 178 inspectors to deal with this question, and Austria 168, and Great Britain 165, Italy had only 3, and the grievances of the railwaymen had been largely due to the lack of an organized system of State supervision.⁵² Yet even Zanardelli's reform did not greatly improve the situation. Here, as in the field of military expense, the fundamental fact could not be circumvented: Italy was a poor country, and her State finances could not stand the strain of the social measures adopted in wealthier nations. The same held good in regard to a reform of the laws regulating the hours of work for women and children. During their discussion, Papafava himself (certainly one of the most generous and sensitive of reformers) said plainly that in view of the sufferings they would cause such new measures might do more harm than good. If, he wrote, "the women and children were not allowed to work they will not earn, and if they do not earn they cannot eat. . . . Besides, if the industrialists are compelled to substitute men for women and children, they must pay them higher wages . . ." ⁵³ and at this time it was difficult to see how Italian industries were to stand a further increase in wages apart from that effected by the strikes. Accordingly, these measures had to be of a superficial and restricted kind, and Zanardelli found himself hampered at every turn by material obstacles and by a general spirit of passive resistance. He could, in short, effect very little for the "disinherited classes," though he had meant to effect so much; and the little he did achieve earned for his policy the title of the "morpheus policy" ⁵⁴—a policy, that is to say, of injecting sufficient reform into the State to keep people quiescent, but failing to achieve those fundamental and profound changes which would provide the foundations of a better future. And this was so even in regard to the greatest question of his Ministry—the Question of the South.

It was a question that has existed since the establishment of unity and been the source of friction and suffering for over forty years. No previous government had made any serious effort to deal with it, because each had been alarmed by its extraordinary complexity. Given the tangle of interests it involved and the severe shock likely to result from an attempt

to adjust them, political wisdom seemed summed up in the remark of Depretis when refusing an inquiry into the conditions of agricultural workers—"Sleeping misery is better not awoken." From this point of view the situation could in fact be reduced to a simple formula: the people of the South were ignorant; they were, generally speaking, resigned; so long as their suffering was inarticulate, what necessity existed to observe it? Zanardelli's temperament and humanity would alone have made him dissent from this attitude. But by 1901 public opinion itself had begun to change, and sympathy and interest were felt for issues that had formerly inspired either regional antipathy or, more simply, comfortable incredulity. The change was due very largely to the work of a group of publicists who had braved ridicule and hostility for the sake of a cause they had made their own. Their task had not been easy. People had not wanted to believe that a great injustice existed, or more especially that they themselves were helping to perpetuate it. They resented hearing the truth, not only because it clashed with the dictates of long-accumulated prejudice, but because it was injurious to their vanity and to the self-esteem which had decided that a reordering of their world was neither necessary nor desirable. To move them from this rooted and passive conviction there had been necessary not only the work of Villari, of Sonnino and Franchetti, of Fortunato and Colajanni, and Nitti and Labriola—men whose disinterest and devotion deserved the highest honour—but the insurrections in the time of Crispi, the continued mutterings of social unrest and, most of all, the publication of the Casale scandal by the journal *Propaganda*, and in 1901 the publication of the Saredo Commission's Report on Public Administration in Naples.⁵⁵ This Report had filled two large volumes of print, and revealed among other things a widespread state of corruption, a systematic violation of the laws, and an abuse of public interests amounting to deliberate spoliation. Given such facts it was impossible to ignore the conditions which had produced them; and in December 1901 numerous interpellations had been made in the Camera.⁵⁶ In reply Zanardelli had declared that the matter was to receive special Government attention, and that the "Question of the

South" was one which he considered called for general and national co-operation.⁵⁷

What was the question of the South? Many answers had been made to the inquiry, and hardly one had managed to give a satisfactory analysis of the facts.⁵⁸ Indeed, it was not simply a regional problem to be understood in terms of Sicily and Sardegna and certain Neapolitan provinces alone. It was rather a peninsular issue, the general meaning of which may be inferred from its chief characteristic: the coexistence within the one nation, not merely of two different civilizations, but of two different levels of civilization. Nature, climate, geography, and history had all combined to sever the South from the North and create in it different forms of human activity and economic development, different habits and traditions, and different attitudes of spirit and intellect. "A land that from its beginnings was arrested by poverty," said Fortunato of the South. "A land where social life has always lacked the light and air of liberty." And the determining factors of this state of affairs were to be found, not in the character of the people or in the centuries of alien misgovernment they had endured, but in the extraordinary miserliness of nature, in the relentless physical conditions which made the South naturally and *a priori* a land inferior to the remaining parts of Italy. With the exception of certain regions—with the exception of the Campania from the Garigliano to the Sele, with the exception of the Bari lands from the Ofanto to Brindisi, with the exception especially of the fertile Conca D'Oro flourishing near Palermo, and of certain other Sicilian districts—nearly all the Southern territory was handicapped by climate, soil, and topography. The North, it is true, had its desert regions in the Marches and in the Emilian part of the Apennines; but it had nothing to compare with the barren steppes of the South—steppes where, in place of good fertile earth there were for the most part long expanses of crumbling clay, or else stretches of impervious chalk strata capable of nourishing only dog grass for the pasturing of wild nomad flocks; or if these were excepted, regions of bare and granite rock sloping steeply to the sea. And the difference in climate between the North and the South was equally great. Half of Calabria, part of Sardegna,

and the whole of Sicily lay within the zone of the semi-tropics; and if the other Southern provinces were less burnt by the sun, they were parched instead by unfavourable rainfall, by the *libeccio* wind and the terrible scourge of drought. "Lower Italy . . . is a kingdom apart and isolated," said a Southerner bitterly, "a kingdom of discontinuity, with confused labyrinths of broken mountains, with wild torrents in place of rivers, with great expanses of desert neither irrigated nor capable of irrigation, deserts over which malaria reigns supreme . . ." Perhaps in some respects the picture was exaggerated; yet in fundamentals it was true of a great part of the Southern provinces, and their history from Roman to modern times testified to its effects.

Already in the eighth century the artificial unity imposed on the Italian peninsula by the Romans had given way to a schism between the Southern and the Northern and Central lands. The North, peculiarly open to foreign invasions and peculiarly tempting in its flourishing prosperity, had had a totally different development from that of the Southern kingdom.⁵⁹ In the North, divided and subdivided into a variety of forms of government, ranging from the theocratic states of the Popes to the democratic republic of Florence and the powerful oligarchy of Venice, the clash and conflict of war had not stifled the energies of the people. The rise of industry and commerce, expressed in the brilliant civilization of the Northern towns, had helped to give their life a dynamic and progressive rhythm—a rhythm which seemed at once to attract and stimulate wealth. Underlying the political diversity of the provinces, moreover, there had been the spirit of the communes—liberal, social, enlightened—a spirit that seemed peculiarly adapted to foster enterprise, whether in art and culture or in the fields of trade and civil organization. In contrast to this the kingdom of Southern Italy, sunk in economic poverty, stifled by an oppressive and despotic political system, had remained century after century a region inaccessible to the influences of a changing world. Nowhere in the peninsula had feudalism darted such tenacious and greedy roots into the soil and the individual activity of man been more cruelly suppressed. Lack of capital, lack of trade,

lack of opportunity for anything but a patient scratching of the soil—this had been the fate of most of the Southern provinces with rare intervals of relief; intervals such as (for example) the rule of Frederick II, when for a short time civilization had flourished, and Apulia been the home of a gifted King and a splendid Court. For the most part the country had been in the hands of the barons, feudal lords who were also great landed proprietors and resisted any attempt at subdividing their vast estates. Where in the North a natural process had resulted in the gradual partitioning of the land, in the South there had been nothing to disturb the dead hand of the Church, nothing to break up the area of the latifundia and the large holdings. As a result Southern society had not developed that bourgeoisie class which had contributed so notably to the flourishing life of the North. It lacked a Third Estate; and the lack was a key to one of its greatest miseries.⁶⁰ For it meant that between the reactionary landlords and the wretched peasants there was no middle term to ferment and insist on change. No new spirit or real change of régime appeared in the South before 1799; and even then the liberal innovations introduced by Napoleon and the wind of the French Revolution found little ground ready to receive them. Feudalism persisted late into the nineteenth century, and in 1860 when the country was to be united to the North it was centuries behind its partner in social and economic development. Agriculture was primitive and dependent on an exhausted soil; industries were practically non-existent; malaria was widespread; and so far as communications were concerned there were very few vehicular roads, while no railway existed outside a suburb of Naples.⁶¹ In general the population consisted of a class of poor and illiterate agriculturists, struggling manfully to extract a living from their small holdings, and perennially in debt either to their landlords or to the usurers whose clutches they had been unable to avoid. Apart from these, there were the impoverished but pretentious *galantuomini*, idle, feckless, convinced that the duties of a proprietor terminated with the extortion and raising of rents; and, apart from them, the *latifundisti*—absentee landlords for the most part who lived in Naples or some other city abroad,

and (with certain honourable exceptions) spent whatever revenue they received on anything except the land from which it had come. Yet on this primitive and untrained society the new Italian kingdom had of necessity imposed the complicated machinery of a modern and representative political system.⁶² Was it really surprising that in the South at least the system became one chiefly of exploitation? Was it surprising that public affairs became a field for tyranny by local oligarchies, that elections became simply a competition for personal power in which all means fair and foul were used to defeat the legitimate purposes of the vote: that democratic principles became simply a screen for a cycle of illicit interests, that administration had come to mean corruption, and representation the satisfaction of private ambition? It was no paradox to say, as Franchetti said, that in the provinces of the South and in Sicily the Italian State had re-established feudalism to the benefit of the local oligarchies, making their rule even more oppressive by adding to it the burden of a bureaucratic machine. Illegitimate influences of all kinds—bribes, privileges, intimidations—had honeycombed the system of parliamentary government; and as if these were not in themselves enough, they had been accompanied by an unjust and oppressive system of taxation and a series of ill-considered laws.

None of these things had been done maliciously or with deliberate intent. At the root of the maladjusted relations between North and South was not so much ill-will as ignorance and incomprehension. In the first years of union especially, a complete illusion prevailed regarding the nature of the South and its capacity. It was thought of as the Promised Land of the poets—the land of the orange-trees: "too greatly favoured by Nature," as Bonghi happily remarked; "an exceptionally endowed region," according to Sella; "singularly rich," from Depretis; "the most favoured country in Europe," from Minghetti.⁶³ This legend moreover had existed as early as 1804, when Coco had spoken of "that most productive soil and mildest of climates"; and Petrucelli della Gattina, a particularly searching and unromantic critic, had referred to it as a "country for which God had exhausted the opulence of creation." In terms of this dream (and it was a dream more than true of

the best districts of Sicily and Campania) it was thought that unity would, without further ado, unlock a store of riches in the South and bring to light natural resources hitherto neglected. If anything, the South was considered by many politicians (though not by Cavour)⁶⁴ as the wealthy partner of the union, capable of contributing greatly to the national budget and perhaps less in need of consideration than, say Piedmont, which had borne the main expense of the wars of liberation. Whence the heedless absorption of its army and navy by the North; whence the destruction of its old bureaucracy; whence finally the extension to it of the Piedmontese and Sardinian form of taxation—a form which meant that at one stroke the Neapolitan kingdom passed from the category of lightly taxed to the category of heavily taxed states. Nor was this the worst. Simultaneously it was forced to exchange its own tariff organization for the national one of Italy and submit to a new scale of duties, dictated more often than not by the needs of the North. Its protests were hardly listened to. Even when its stagnancy and poverty began to be realized they were felt almost as Northern grievances—trials sent to retard the rise of prosperous people. For the North resented the heritage of social *malaise* that existed everywhere in the Southern provinces; it resented the backwardness which acted as a clog on its own swift and energetic development; it resented those traditions of corruption and wire-pulling which crippled political life; it resented, in short, both the past and the present of its partner.

Such was the historical background of the problem with which Zanardelli was faced. But by 1901 its main features were comprised in the two great issues of taxation and tariff reform.⁶⁵ As already indicated, the taxation question was an old one. Its crux might be briefly resumed by saying that, while the North possessed seven-tenths of the natural wealth of Italy and the South only three-tenths, the North contributed to the total of national taxation *not* (as it should have) 70 per cent, but 66 per cent; while the unfortunate South, handicapped as it was, paid 34 per cent instead of 30 per cent; and in a land where, as one foreign writer said, “the poverty of Italy became destitution” the additional 4 per cent was felt

as insupportable taxation. The taxes were moreover ill-adapted to the economic structure of a predominantly agricultural country. They fell mainly on the struggling lower classes, so that, as Professor Villari said, there was "progressive taxation topsy-turvy"—the less a man had the more he paid. To redress the evil far more would have been needed than a mere lightening of financial exactions; what was wanted was a radical readjustment of the whole financial organization. The view of the South was in fact admirably expressed by the Minister of Finance in March 1901, when he said that "our whole system of finance—local and central—is too great a burden on the economy of the country, is of too extensive a type, and weighs too unequally on the social classes of different means as well as on the different regions of Italy which have different degrees of prosperity." The words were Wollemborg's, and as we have seen he was forced to resign. The tactful tinkering at the fiscal structure carried on by his successor effected from a general point of view very little.

There remained, therefore, as the great and most urgent question, that of tariff reform. Zanardelli was, it is true, no more responsible for the commercial agreements concluded by his predecessors than he was for their fiscal organization; and he could scarcely do more than consider revising their terms when the time of renewal arrived. Still, something might have been done to adjust the scale of duties so that the Southern agriculturist could have enjoyed a better market abroad and bought more cheaply at home. In effect, it was not done because the Northern industrialists possessed the predominating voice in Parliament, because it was easy for them to enter into a species of unholy alliance with the great landowners, agreeing for their part to maintain a high import duty on corn, while the landowners accepted a Protectionist programme for industry.⁶⁶ Thus being the mathematics of the situation, Zanardelli was from the outset tied hand and foot; and in point of fact he did not invite failure by attempting the impossible. Confining his attentions to such palliatives as were within reach, he succeeded in achieving at least some practical results. Above all he made good what he had promised in his initial speech on the subject—and that was not negligible.

He obtained Parliament's consent to a law providing for more rapid communication between Rome and Naples; he induced the State to undertake the responsibility and four-fifths of the expense of constructing an aqueduct in Puglia—an aqueduct which represented one of the greatest public works which the United Kingdom had undertaken. He achieved the appointment of a Commission to study the problem of assisting Naples by a process of industrialization; he set about removing the injustice in terms of which the bulk of public money spent on communications and reclamation and irrigation went to the North;⁶⁷ he provided for the redemption of certain distressed areas, and he induced the Camera to pass a special measure to relieve the suffering and evils of the Basilicata. More than this, he himself undertook a personal tour of the region. The first Premier to attempt a personal investigation of the South, the first Premier to recognize officially that there existed a "Southern Question," the moral effects of this journey were incalculable. Certainly it was no easy tour, to be compared with the graceful and flying visits paid to their constituencies by modern politicians. It was rather a pilgrimage lasting thirteen days, during which Zanardelli, a man of over sixty-seven, already ill and overworked, traversed rough country, often by means of a wagon drawn by oxen, nearly always in the midst of an implacable and burning heat.⁶⁸ He derived a vivid impression from his experience. "Day after day," he said, "one traverses mountainous country, destitute, without any form of production, almost without a blade of grass. . . . One journeys hour after hour without finding a house, and to the silence of the barren mountains and sterile . . . valleys there succeeds the silence of deadly plains, where violent streams destroy the cultivated lands, and, overflowing, form long stretches of marsh . . ."⁶⁹ The simplest necessities of life seemed to be lacking; there was only one hospital in the region; in fifty-five communes, according to the petitions of the inhabitants, there was no adequate supply of healthy drinking water; malaria flourished in one hundred and six communes out of one hundred and twenty-five; in the province as a whole illiteracy reached the figure of 79 per cent for the total population, where for the kingdom in general it was

52 per cent; the death-rate was 27 per mille, and those whom death and malaria spared strove to escape their misery by emigration—which had increased from eight or nine thousand persons a year during 1897–99 to over seventeen thousand for the year 1901 alone.⁷⁰

That Zanardelli sincerely desired to remedy these evils was shown, not alone by his speeches,⁷¹ but by the Bill he presented to Parliament in June 1903. It aimed at a well-planned increase in the means of communication, at giving general assistance to agriculturists and at improving the whole level of provincial life. But its passage through Parliament was delayed, and it did not become law till the 31st March, 1904, under Giolitti's ministry. It was accordingly Zanardelli's successor who chiefly reaped the credit in the matter, and though Zanardelli's handling of the problem at this time won some sympathy in the country, it did nothing to strengthen his position in Parliament. There were many Southerners who regarded what was offered them as a species of almsgiving, a concession of privileges where they asked nothing but common justice. From this point of view they were inclined to resent rather than appreciate Zanardelli's good intentions; and indeed, to a region that had suffered so much was it not the last humiliation to be offered the kindness of those who had wronged it? In this way Zanardelli's measures failed to obtain the enthusiastic support of those they were to benefit, while they aroused the hostility of those whom change disturbed. Distrust and suspicion continued to pursue his ministry, and received a new stimulus from the new developments in foreign affairs.

It was a field where his attitude was open to serious reproach. For, like Depretis, he viewed foreign affairs as a necessary evil and thought they were best dealt with when left alone.⁷² This view was indeed still a general one. The lethargy which had preceded the disastrous period of Crispi plus the bitter reaction which had followed it still dominated the general consciousness: and the deputies, prompted by habit, tradition, and natural inclination to ignoring international problems, felt no urge to set about recognizing them now. And yet the situation abroad was too crucial and delicate to be ignored. It was impossible not to observe the changing disposition of

power, which was already altering willy-nilly the compass points of Italy's orientation; it was impossible to ignore England's detachment from the Central European bloc and her growing *rapprochement* with France. Moreover, the cardinal feature in the new situation was the steady growth of an Italian-French friendship, bequeathed by Visconti-Venosta to his successor as the result of long and circumspect manoeuvring. Prinetti was not, alas, the man to take advantage of the inheritance. A Milanese engineer, energetic and combative, he was entirely without diplomatic training. Only a Prime Minister indifferent to events abroad would have appointed him to the portfolio he held; and in point of fact Zanardelli, questioned by his friends as to the wisdom of importing so new an element into the Cabinet, had replied carelessly: "But, after all, what have I given him? Only the Ministry for Foreign Affairs." A remark most unfortunately indicative of the kind of policy that was to ensue.

For Prinetti failed to realize how far even the situation at home had altered. The Triple Alliance had always been unpopular; but it had never had so few supporters as in these years, nor appeared so completely lacking in material advantage. The Central European Powers had lost much with the death of Umberto. Men who had hesitated to oppose the alliance previously, because to oppose it was to cross the will of the King, knew that Vittorio-Emanuele had strong French sympathies and Queen Elena affinity with the Slavs.⁷³ They knew, too, that the young King deeply resented the attitude of Austria towards Italy; that he felt the discourteous refusal of Franz-Joseph to return his father's visit as a personal affront to his country and to his House. And apart from this, it was generally felt that the problem of the *terre Irredente* had taken too deep a root for friendship with Austria to be made sincere at this date. The unswerving loyalty of the Italians of Trieste and the Trentino region even after Adowa had stimulated fellow feeling for them in Italy, and if Austria continued to accuse Italy of fomenting trouble within the Empire, Italy felt her continual ill-treatment of her Italian subjects as an unpardonable humiliation. Besides, political circles in Italy were still alarmed by the recent spectre of an Austrian annexation

of Albania.⁷⁴ Actually such an annexation was unlikely; but the vision of the Austrian Empire strategically master of Valona was an unpleasant one and enough to create anticipatory mistrust. Finally there was general distaste for Germany's new policy of hostility towards England. For where in 1887 Bismarck had been careful to draw England within the orbit of the Alliance by means of the secret Anglo-Italian-Austrian Conventions regarding the Mediterranean, von Bülow's new dream of *Welt-politik* was steadily estranging her—was in fact creating sufficient friction for the British Government to refuse to renew the old conventions of 1902. And this was a serious blow to Italy's interest in the Triple Alliance. Already in 1882 the Italian Government had stipulated that the Alliance should never be directed against England, and the agreements of 1887 had constituted a species of guarantees by sea, as the alliance with Germany and Austria had been a guarantee by land. The new situation replaced an alignment of forces favourable to Italy by one verging on the unfavourable, more especially as England was not only turning away from the German-Austrian bloc, but steadily achieving a *rapprochement* with France. Lastly, there was the fact that France herself was seeking a Franco-Italian *entente* and endeavouring to remove the old causes of hostility. The commercial agreements of 1898 had been followed by an agreement in 1900 regarding the boundary between French Somalia and the Italian protectorate of Raheita;⁷⁵ and this in turn had been followed by a French declaration practically giving Italy a free hand in Tripolitania. Moreover, the old causes of dissension which had done so much to throw Italy into the arms of Germany—French clericalism and the humiliation of Tunis—were now things of the past. Had Prinetti been a diplomat of skill and enterprise, there was no reason why Italy should not have entered the more congenial sphere of French-Russian-English relations and escaped that of her old associates. Considered from every point of view the Austro-German Alliance had outlived its utility, and to perpetuate it was to perpetuate an anachronism.⁷⁶ But unfortunately Prinetti missed his opportunity; he cultivated friendship with France, but he could not take the vital step necessary to turn amicable understanding

into diplomatic agreement.⁷⁷ Worse still, he continued the old evil of accumulating suspicion on the part of Germany and Austria without any concrete and definite trust on the part of the French Government;⁷⁸ and the ultimate renewal of the Triple Alliance (for it was ultimately renewed) was accompanied by so much vacillation and ill-directed negotiating that it appeared even more unsatisfactory than it was.

Indeed, he inspired mistrust in Germany and Austria almost from the beginning of his Ministry. In order to continue the spirit of Visconti-Venosta's *entente* with France, part of the Italian fleet was sent to visit Toulon,⁷⁹ and the collar of the Annunziata was conferred on the President of the French Republic. Subsequently in 1901 Prinetti declared publicly in the Camera that complete confidence existed between the French and the Italian Governments, and that France had given satisfactory assurances of disinterest in Tripolitania. His declaration was far from being gratifying to the Central Powers, and its ill-effects were deepened by a particularly self-assured speech on the part of the French Ambassador in Rome, who announced that "between Italy and France . . . relations of friendship . . . have been definitely developed and consolidated." Lastly, if anything were wanting to complete the picture of French-Italian solidarity, Delcassé in a long interview with an Italian journalist not only confirmed the existence of good relations between France and Italy, but went on to show that no ground for discord existed between the two nations either in Africa, the Mediterranean or the Balkans, adding that Russia might be considered as the Power most likely to understand and aid Italian aspirations in the Adriatic.⁸⁰

This was a veiled challenge to Austria, and it was to quieten the alarm raised by the incident that Bülow, on the 8th January, 1902, explained the situation to the Reichstag. The French-Italian agreements regarding the Mediterranean were not, he said, in conflict with the interests of the Triple Alliance. ". . . In a happy marriage the husband must not be jealous if his wife takes an innocent turn at a waltz with another. The essential thing is that she should not deceive him . . ."⁸¹ It was a speech probably more confident in tone than in

inspiration. Germany and Austria asked for a renewal of the Alliance in advance, and in the course of the long negotiations preceding it Prinetti was indiscreet enough first to try and insist on a clause favourable to France being inserted in the preamble,⁸² and then to give France assurances as to the essentially defensive character of the alliance. Finally, five months after its renewal—in November 1902—there was even an interchange of letters with Barrère destined to have considerable influence on Italian policy in 1915. Having explicitly accorded France a free hand in Morocco, Prinetti added: “I am authorized in the name of H.M.’s Government to make the following declaration: ‘If France should be directly or indirectly attacked by one or more Powers, Italy will observe a strict neutrality. The same applies if France, as a result of direct provocation, finds it necessary to take the initiative in declaring war in defence of her honour and security. In this eventuality the Government of the Republic must communicate its intention to the Government of His Majesty in advance, so that the latter may be in a position to decide whether or no the case is really one of direct provocation.’”⁸³

Actually there was nothing in this exchange of views contrary to the terms of the Triple Alliance, but the general spirit which surrounded it created considerable tension between Italy and her Allies—a tension which continued even after a visit to Berlin of Vittorio-Emanuele and a return visit by the Kaiser. It continued particularly because the King omitted to visit Vienna on his tour abroad, but did instead find time for a stay at Petrograd, while in 1903 he met with an ovation from some enthusiastic Irredentists. This incident nearly produced an open rupture with Austria, and so strong was the mutual ill-feeling created that it seemed temporarily as if it must break up the Alliance. But at the crucial moment Italy was kept in her old bondage by two events—the death of Prinetti, who had been definitely Francophile, and the Socialist opposition to any understanding with Russia. For to have established an agreement with France it would have been necessary at least to be on good terms with Russia; and Prinetti had so far succeeded in obtaining Russian goodwill that the Tsar had announced his intention of visiting Rome.

The idea of the visit was anathema to the Socialists. A certain section of them, more used to the luxury of popular rhetoric than the realities of political thought, declared openly that if the Tsar came he would be received with organized demonstrations of hostility, including whistles and catcalls . . .⁸⁴ It did not apparently occur to them that this attitude conflicted with their Irredentist principles and with their sworn hatred of the authoritarian governments of the Central Powers. If Italy were to leave the Triple Alliance, where else could she go if not to the Dual Franco-Russian Alliance? Had not the French Socialists digested the bitter pill of alliance with the Tsar in recognition of the exigencies of foreign policy? And would not the participation of France in such an alliance have been a guarantee of its liberalism? These were points that deserved consideration; but even if on second thoughts the Socialists had been ready for conciliation, they were deprived of the opportunity of showing it. For the Tsar, bitterly offended by the whole agitation and already desirous of a strong position in Europe in case of war with Japan, turned to Austria and concluded with her the Convention of Mürzsteg. This was in the first week of October; in the second he announced the indefinite postponement of his visit to Rome. Certainly the attitude of the Socialists had not been alone responsible for the change; at this moment friendship with Austria certainly offered Russia more than friendship with Italy.⁸⁵ Yet at the same time the reckless tirades of Socialist deputies and the equally reckless polemics of the Socialist Press had harmed Italy's prestige abroad,⁸⁶ and—worst of all—practically sealed the fate of Zanardelli's Government.

The Socialists had indeed for some time been skilfully harassing the life of the Ministry, less perhaps because they wanted its downfall than because their own dissensions imposed on them the necessity of outside distraction. For at the Congress of Imola in September 1902 the Socialist Party had split into two wings—the Reformist wing led by Turati, Bonomi and Bissolati, and the Revolutionary wing led by Labriola and Ferri.⁸⁷ Discomfited at the Congress, the Revolutionary wing had nevertheless gained considerable influence after it, and Ferri (whose talents for intrigue were

considerable) had brought about Bissolati's resignation from the editorship of the chief Socialist paper, *Avanti*. Subsequently, assuming the editorship himself he was now in search of an exciting public scandal likely to resuscitate its circulation, and he found it in the administration of the Ministry of Marine.⁸⁸ In a series of scathing articles beginning on 18th May, 1903, the *Avanti* adopted the tone of Zola's *J'accuse*, and accused the Minister of Marine of malversation and corruption in assigning contracts for the construction of cruisers.⁸⁹ It was unfortunately true that there had been some unforgivable corruption in the Department of Marine; graft and fraud of every description had flourished so extensively that it would have been difficult for any accusation not to find a mark. But Ferri's attacks on the Minister (Admiral Bettólo) were personal and not confined to generalities. It was said that he had bribed the Superior Council for Naval Affairs into sanctioning a contract involving the expenditure of 20 million lire—a contract which was designed principally to increase the dividends of the shareholders in the Terni Steelworks Company.⁹⁰ "The shares of the Company," remarked the *Avanti* pointedly, "have soared every time in the last few years that the honourable Bettólo has assumed the portfolio for Marine."

And Bettólo's defence in answer to the charges was weak. Although he succeeded in winning a libel action against Ferri, and although he showed that the *Avanti* could produce no serious documentary proof in support of its allegations, the fact remained that the shares of the Terni Company had vacillated in the manner described,⁹¹ and that he could not reassure the public by proving his complete non-complicity. The outcry over the affair increased from day to day, and in the end Bettólo resigned, perforce, his portfolio.⁹²

The scandal shook Zanardelli's Cabinet profoundly, and the more so because he himself was now visibly lacking in the physical vitality necessary to dominate his colleagues.⁹³ Giolitti, who had perceived the drift of events even before Bettólo's fall, had already resigned from the Ministry of the Interior, and with both Giolitti and Bettólo gone Zanardelli felt constrained to offer his own resignation to the King. He

was, however, re-entrusted with the duty of forming a Cabinet. But it was difficult to find successors for the vacant ministries, and in the end sooner than admit defeat Zanardelli himself took the portfolio of the Interior. It was a gallant gesture. Increasing illness (which had reached a point where speeches in Parliament required from him an extraordinary effort), increasing fatigue, and anxiety had all undermined his resources; and he stood now at his post like an animal brought to bay, refusing to yield an inch of the ground over which he had so painfully and wearily advanced. By sheer force of personal eloquence he induced the Camera to approve his new ministry, and to do so with a majority of eighty-six votes; by sheer force of will he continued to deal with affairs of State, to formulate a Liberal programme, and continue with the drafting of promised reforms. But it was of no use. Precisely at this moment there was the ruin of his foreign policy, the cancellation of the visit of the Tsar, and finally the difficulties and cares attendant on the election of a new Pope. Forced to remain in Rome during the full heat of the summer, physical suffering finally made it impossible for him to leave his room, and it was as a man with only three months to live that he asked the King to accept his resignation.⁹⁴

Ostensibly his Government and his philosophy had ended in failure. And yet it was not in terms of failure that his régime was estimated. Men did not remember what he had done or left undone; they remembered the man himself. For to think of him was not to think of the failure of taxation reform or the lack of a new tariff system or the want of a fundamental law for the South. It was to think of a lofty spirit and a generous mind, of a heart as immune from the contagion of petty hatreds as it was sensitive to enthusiasm and disinterested devotion, as swift to understand the sufferings of others as it was to try and redress them. Perhaps he had not succeeded in actuating his "reign of liberty"; but he had at least fought for it, upheld its principles, and remained unswervingly devoted to its faith. A great worker, he had known how to conquer fatigue and the deadly effects of routine and the disillusionment of long political experience. Age had not embittered him, nor ingratitude and incomprehension; and

when he left power he left it with the same serenity, the same steady and courageous beliefs as when many years before he had left his native Brescia to take up his work in Rome. It was for these reasons that his personality remained an inspiration after his death. Men might depreciate the effects of his policy; they were in the end convinced of its author's integrity and the nobility which had shaped his life.

THE RISE OF GIOLITTI

By a curious irony it was Giolitti who was Zanardelli's "natural" successor. He had, it is true, nothing in common with Zanardelli as a man and very little as a politician; but he undoubtedly possessed more influence in the Camera than anyone else, and he had for some time been laying the foundations for power. Indeed, his manœuvres in this direction had not gone unnoticed. Observing his abrupt resignation from the Zanardellian Cabinet just when it had become unpopular, a Socialist writer commented on "his happy art of leaving a sinking ship," while Papafava more indirectly remarked that "the honourable Giolitti has the reputation of being a great Alpine climber and . . . one sees that he is . . .¹ In short, his methods of arriving in power recalled again the curious ruthlessness which he had once shown in his purchase of Madame Crispi's private letters and in his association with the Bank of Rome scandals. . . . It was a ruthlessness that sprang perhaps from the same cause as the other defects in his political personality—a subordination of all instincts and feelings to intellect and the subordination of intellect in turn to power. Reading his speeches, considering his career, it was almost impossible to believe him capable of spontaneity, impossible to believe that he would ever do anything directly and without personal calculation. It would, however, have been entirely fallacious to see in him only a commonplace schemer. Everything in the man that touched his intellect reflected its clear and decisive strength. It was only the things that should have touched his nature that seemed suddenly, strangely, to have encountered stony ground. . . . Vision, creative power, that deep and permanent sense of humanity which may inspire the most unscrupulous of statesmen, were things outside the range of his mind. He could handle political material with the brilliant skill of a craftsman; he could not mould and transform it with the genius of a political artist.² And his contemporaries, analysing the ingredients of his

success, observed as much. "Giolitti," wrote one, "is undoubtedly a great parliamentary leader, but there is something lacking in him which prevents him from being a great statesman. He is not representative. Both Crispi and Zanardelli were representative; people were vehemently and passionately adherents or opponents of each. The name of Giolitti only stands for a vaguely democratic tradition becoming more and more anaemic and amorphous. He arouses neither strong dislike nor strong affection in the country. He does not strike a single chord of national feeling . . . he is not responsible for any active current of public opinion. . . . At the best, he can be said to represent the policy of pedestrian common-sense living from day to day. His (last) programme . . . is the plan of action of a mere divisional commander; it is little worthy of a country which boasts the name of Italy."³ Another contemporary, speaking in Parliament in December 1903, touched much the same note. "Assuredly . . . Giolitti has in his mind certain formulae . . . lucid, precise, almost geometrical . . . formulas for regulating the relations between the Government and the various classes . . . (and) in the application of these formulas he has a swift perception. . . . He has now, however, a passionate and inspired conception of the things which are the complex necessities (both material and emotional) of the life of a great country. He does not see what should be Italy's destiny in the world. He loves liberty; yes, but he does not love it with enthusiasm of spirit—it, too, is a geometrical calculation, inspired by utilitarianism . . . of an economic kind, by considerations of public order. . . . (He) sees Italy as it has appeared in the last few years; he does not seek the reasons for its traditional being, its historical and philosophical origins . . ."⁴

It followed logically that such a character was not likely to resume Zanardelli's efforts at reconstructing the country; and in fact, if not in theory, it was Giolitti's aim to govern with the adherence of the greatest number of Deputies, to avoid causing dissensions or rifts among them, and—while giving reasonable expression to democratic tendencies in the nation—to do nothing which should endanger the stability of his majority.⁵ Such a policy was not without its general com-

pensations. It meant a large measure of liberty in internal affairs: it included much acquiescence in efforts to improve the workers' conditions; and it suggested the possibility of a working compromise between Socialists and Conservatives. By inclination and habit Giolitti was democratic, and it would have pleased him to see the Government enact increasingly democratic legislation.

It seemed at first as if he would succeed in making it do so. Both the Conservatives and the Socialists showed themselves well disposed towards him. The Socialists because his name was still encircled by the halo of his *laissez-faire* policy towards the strikes—an attitude which had so far impressed the rural workers that in the country his photo was placed next to that of Marx and Ferri.⁶ The Conservatives because they found that, after all, the concessions granted to the workers were not as ruinous as they had expected, and were even (in one sense) economical, since they lessened the possibility of working-class disturbances. Under these circumstances there should have been no difficulty over forming a Cabinet.⁷ Unexpectedly, however, the *Estrema* refused its collaboration, thereby depriving Giolitti of the chance of realizing one of his most cherished plans. For he had planned to associate the Socialists with his régime, and in this way both to strengthen the bases of his Ministry in Parliament and draw the teeth of possible Socialist enemies outside. But Turati, the chief leader of the *Estrema*, did not wish to compromise his group, and the Radicals (whom he next approached) showed a similar reluctance. Apart from this, moreover, the ex-Zanardellians let it be seen that they were not anxious to associate themselves with their former colleague; and as they represented the Moderate element in the Left, their refusal coupled with that of the Radicals and Socialists, meant that the Cabinet could not, *a priori*, have the notably democratic character Giolitti had planned. Logically this meant that he should have given up his attempt at forming a ministry, since to have invited Turati's and the *Estrema's* support implied a definitely reformist Government with a Left programme.⁸ Instead Giolitti modified his ideas and turned towards the Right, putting together a ministry of which only one member (the distin-

guished economist Luzzatti) had previously held a portfolio. A talented general was found to take the portfolio of War, and an admiral that of Naval Affairs; three Under-Secretaries of State were advanced to ministerial rank (Orlando, Rava, Tedesco), and the Prefect of Naples, Tittoni, was haled from his prefecture to take over Foreign Affairs, of which (in accordance with the best Depretian traditions) he had not had the slightest previous experience. Even this solution of Giolitti's difficulties, however, proved temporary. His adversaries, observing that he was not finding his work easy, began to nourish hopes of defeating his Government, and the Socialist and Democratic Press launched a violent moral campaign against Tittoni and Rosano, Minister of Finance. The campaign had important effects; for though it produced no appreciable impression on Tittoni, it proved disastrous for Rosano. A sensitive man of artistic leanings, he had recently endured private griefs and private anxieties which made it seem a final burden in an intolerable life—and he shot himself.⁹

His death created an immediate revulsion in the Government's favour. Persecution—and more especially religious or moral persecution—had never had a great share in Italian history, and in nearly every period had been antipathetic to the Italian character. Accustomed to acquiesce with patient tolerance in whatever ills the gods might send—whether Bourbon exploitation or Depretian misgovernment—they now felt the moral indignation of the Socialists to have been both spiteful and socially cruel. And accordingly they refused to interest themselves in the rights and wrongs of the accusations. It was in vain that the *Avanti* declared that the episode had left a "stain of blood" on Giolitti's ministry and demanded his immediate resignation.¹⁰ Public sympathy was with the Premier, and Giolitti knew how to rise to the occasion. Inducing Luzzatti to assume the interim portfolio of Finance, he obtained a majority of one hundred and sixty-seven votes on his official programme of government.

It was a curious programme, comprising many pleasing generalities and few controversial particulars. While seeming to promise much it offered in reality little, and in its colourless neutrality should have been equally acceptable to every section

of the Camera. It promised for instance a Liberal policy in internal affairs and the initiation of a period of social, economic, and financial reforms (though it omitted to specify their nature); it favoured an improvement in the lot of the working classes, but it explained that this depended on a general improvement in the economic improvement of the country; it declared that the chief questions to be settled in this regard were those of the commercial treaties, the administration of the railways, the diminution of the public debt, and the state of the Southern provinces—all problems whose relevance to national prosperity no one could really doubt. Finally, it alluded briefly to a reform of taxation, navigated skilfully the shoals usually fringing the subject, and emerged easily into smooth water with a general engagement to “maintain all previous reforms”—a general etcetera which might safely be left to the imagination of each deputy to interpret.¹¹

None of these points in fact put a strain on men's ideological convictions or invited their disapproval. Of a general and unquestionable respectability, they evoked the applause of all deputies except those of the Extreme Right, the Extreme Left, and a small fraction of the Centre. Actually Giolitti had succeeded in re-creating a majority of the type once created by Depretis—a majority without definite political character or political principles, formless in ideas but docile in allegiance, grouped round his personality, and owing its existence chiefly to his particular will.¹² Remembering the havoc which Depretis' system had worked with the country's morale, the effect of the Giolittian might have caused some foreboding; and indeed, a warning note was sounded by Barzilai. It did not, however, find a general echo. The hundred and sixty-seven of the majority settled down to vote the laws presented to them and to recuperate the energies uselessly expended in the controversies of the Zanardellian period.

The first problem to be settled was that of the Commercial Treaties. After minor conflicts between the free traders and the protectionists the agreement with Switzerland was renewed in July 1904, and that with Germany in December 1904. Neither was negotiated in a manner likely to help the country materially, though Giolitti showed himself more aware of the

claims of agrarian interests than his predecessors. The best work of this period consisted of a miscellaneous series of measures including an improvement in the condition of various grades of public servants, an improvement in the position of the much-downtrodden teachers in elementary schools, a reform of the penitential system (with a more enlightened systematization of prison routine), and finally a series of alterations in the law regarding public health and charity institutions.¹³

The Giolittian system was, in short, far from beginning badly, and this very fact provided it with soil in which to grow. Giolitti, it was clear, would be an attentive parliamentary leader, and one outstandingly gifted with governmental *savoir faire*. After the doctrinal alarms and excursions of the preceding period, there was something pleasant in observing public affairs treated as if they were part of a going commercial concern recently purchased by a business man who meant to renovate, and improve, his stock, without the introduction of too many experimental novelties. Whether in the long run it was quite the best policy for a country to be dealt with as if it were a warehouse, and its Government a kind of limited company, was another matter; for the moment Government and Parliament were functioning well, and even such an important question as that of the South was (apparently) to be settled. Actually no issue could have revealed more clearly the lacunae in the Giolittian policy. For the law on the Basilicata bequeathed by Zanardelli was altered, and altered in a way that did not add to its practical efficacy. One of the most serious Southern issues—that of leases and contracts between peasants and landlords—was simply not dealt with, and the provisos made for the establishment of agricultural credit were formulated in a way more likely to help the propertied classes than the peasants. Finally, when it came to applying the law the Government showed itself just as inert as the other governments that had ignored the grievances of the South. Neither Giolitti nor his successors took steps to actuate the measures they had officially recognized to be necessary; and after twenty years' sad experience of the results of the "relief" legislation an impartial critic could only write that the law for

the Basilicata, like the special laws for Calabria, Sicily and Sardegna (June–July 1906) had more often than not proved a tragic farce.¹⁴ Only the law designed to help the city of Naples by a process of systematic industrialization (July 1904) really achieved a part of the results expected of it, co-ordinating the commercial energies of the city and providing new forms for its development.

The same apparent success and real inadequacy was shown in foreign policy. Tittoni, it is true, revealed a firmness and competency not to be expected from his previous lack of training; but though his clear-headedness helped to resolve difficulties of a minor order, it did not extend to finding a suitable orientation for Italy in international affairs. Accepting the antimonies already implicit in the policy bequeathed by Prinetti, he strove to base his diplomacy on the principle of “the peaceful coexistence of friendships and alliances”—in other words, he strove to maintain and consolidate the Triple Alliance while simultaneously working for a *rapprochement* with France and England on the basis of the preservation of the *status quo* and of peace. Theoretically nothing could have been more excellent. In practice, however, nothing could have been more fatal to the acquisition of a position of real strength in Europe, as the whole course of Italian history since 1871 had shown. It was useless for Tittoni, citing formal arguments of an impeccable validity, to reiterate that the Triple Alliance was a defensive pact, that no incompatibility existed between friendship with France and friendship with Germany, and that a good Anglo-Italian understanding was a national tradition.¹⁵ The fact remained that to exhibit feeling for France was to inspire distrust in Germany; that to exhibit cordiality towards Russia was to offend Austria; while to sympathize with the gradual formation of the English-French-Russian bloc was, subjectively at least, to impose a strain on the general spirit of the Triple Alliance. Italian policy in fact appeared to foreign diplomats precisely what Tittoni was most anxious to prevent it appearing. “Our policy,” he said, “is not, as some have said, a policy of balancing, of trying to maintain an equilibrium, of skilful contriving . . . for such a policy would not be worthy of a great nation, nor could it be of long duration . . .”

nd, responding to the view that Italy should once for all take up a definite position, he added: ". . . I do not believe that it is necessary for us to alter the direction of our policy . . . and I believe firmly in . . . (its) . . . success . . . on condition that we observe the greatest sincerity, the greatest loyalty, in our relations with Germany and France." Given Italy's natural sympathy for France and her material connections with Germany, these views were something more than diplomatic platitudes; they represented an honest attempt at putting Italy in a position where she could achieve self-expression in a frank and dignified manner. Nor was a touch of realism lacking to Tittoni's arguments. "I have (he continued) said how necessary a policy of peace is to Italy, and how the maintenance of peace must be in the forefront of our thoughts. It is, however, impossible to follow any foreign policy whatever without a strong army and a strong navy and fortified frontiers. I should like . . . not only . . . the conservative parties to be convinced of this but also the democrats . . . I should like to remind (them) of the words of the President of the French Republic: 'The country's vote is for a well-instructed, disciplined, and strong army. This is the best means of maintaining peace (and) of continually increasing the friendliness of other nations, who willingly draw closer to the strong (whom they respect) and neglect the weak, whose friendship and support are useless.' " Had the latter argument found a good reception among the deputies, it is possible that the rest of Tittoni's policy might not have produced the effect it did. For granted a really well-organized and strong State, his readiness to maintain friendship with all might have been regarded as a valuable element in international collaboration, instead of an unpleasing variation on the theme of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

Meanwhile, however (as no decisive event occurred in European affairs to reveal the cracks in the edifice he was constructing), Italy's position appeared a happier one than it had been for decades. There could be no doubt of the popularity of the *rapprochement* with France, or of the tremendous enthusiasm which greeted its manifestation. In October 1903 the King and Queen visited Paris, and in April 1904 the

President of the Republic (Loubet) and the French Minister for Foreign Affairs (Delcassé) returned the visit in Rome. Probably no official guests had ever received so triumphal a reception. It was as though the two countries after a long period of miserable estrangement and misunderstanding had come to know each other for the first time. The vicissitudes of politics, the bitterness of political ambitions and disappointments were forgotten in the recollection of a common heritage, a common culture, and a great common civilization.¹⁶ It was Panzacchi who spoke of that "profound sentiment which unites in blood and history, in memory and in purpose, the two great Latin nations," and his words were no more than the echo of a general and sincere conviction. Men remembered, not Mentana, but the fact that Frenchmen and Italians had fought side by side at Magenta and Solferino, and Garibaldi served as a volunteer at Dijon. They spoke, not of Rouher and Thiers, but of the artistic genius of France and the generous homage which it had always rendered Italy and Italians. Perhaps politics had never counted so little and natural affinity so much as when the educated public was reminded of the Italian sympathies of Stendhal and Balzac, of Victor Hugo and de Musset, of Renan and Michelet. These were names symbolic of common culture and tastes, and they spoke with a force that far surpassed the abstractions of diplomatic agreements. Indeed, it was not only the Italian Press that hailed the visit as a popular event, but the Italian bourgeoisie, and behind the bourgeoisie the common people—people ignorant of the gift of French letters, but aware (however vaguely and unhistorically) of the gifts of French liberty, aware of the democratic tradition and the *laissez-faire* principles represented by the Government of the Third Republic.

Perhaps even Giolitti and his Government were surprised by the psychological phenomenon which the *rapprochement* presented. Certainly evaluating the popular demonstrations in conventional terms they missed, not only their sincerity, but their immense significance for Italy's political future. For in essentials it was this feeling of racial sympathy that, multiplied a hundred times by emergency, demanded Italy's intervention

the Great War and demanded it as an affirmation of popular will, independent of the calculation and bargaining which the diplomats were secretly carrying on.¹⁷

At this time its immediate effect was to cause friction with Germany and with the Vatican. German displeasure, expressed with harsh directness by von Bülow, finally forced Giolitti into a humiliating visit to Homburg,¹⁸ but the dispute with the Vatican resulted more successfully and revealed the masterly coolness which he possessed in dealing with a delicate situation. Refusing to respond to the Holy See's wrathful enunciations of Loubet's stay (the President had omitted to visit the Pope), Giolitti also restrained the anti-clerical forces in the Camera and reaffirmed the old principle that Church and State should like two parallel lines proceed side by side but never touch. It would in any case have been repugnant to his ideas to put an official restraint on clerical opinion. "Our programme," he said, "is liberty for all within the law. And as we apply it to all those parties which are outside the constitution from one extreme, so we must apply it to those who are outside the constitution from another."¹⁹

It was a Liberal declaration much applauded by the Camera, but the Liberalism was possibly not altogether altruistic. With the growing restlessness of the Socialists it would have been strange if so acute a tactician as Giolitti had not considered strengthening his Conservative supporters by an understanding with the clericals. And in point of fact a situation was soon to arise where their goodwill was to be of the greatest value. In September 1904 disturbances occurred among the workers of Sardegnna and Sicily, and in the process of "restoring order" not a few were killed and wounded. And the news had no sooner reached Milan than the two Socialist leaders, Labriola and Mocchi, induced the Workers' Council to proclaim a general strike. It was a form of protest that spread with lightning rapidity throughout Italy and was accompanied by scenes of violence in Venice, Turin, Brescia, Verona, Bologna and Rome, while three warships were sent to Genoa and two to Naples.²⁰ In the end after four days of general panic the strike finished by exhaustion, and the Socialists were somewhat in need of a gesture to restore their credit. They decided

accordingly to defeat the Government, and to do so on a charge of systematically repressing the workers' movement. In fairness to Giolitti it should be said that he had done his best to avoid coercion, and that the Socialists' indignation would have been better founded on a statement of the appalling conditions of the peasant workers in some of the Southern provinces. However, their motion was undoubtedly dangerous to the Premier's position, and he evaded it by asking the King for a dissolution of the Camera.²¹

It was confidently expected that general elections held at a moment when public nervousness was at its height would result in a decisive loss to the Socialists and a general weakening of the popular parties. The latter were indeed in a cleft stick. They could not discountenance the strike without losing the support of the masses; they could not approve it without alienating the bourgeoisie—and the Government enunciating the formula of "neither revolution nor reaction" hoped to secure the reversion of their adherents' votes. Nevertheless, the first scrutiny did not show notable gains to the Liberal-Conservative bloc; and to safeguard his majority Giolitti turned to the clericals. Some of the chiefs of their organization were induced to approach the Pope and plead for a relaxation of that *non expedit* decree which forbade the faithful to concern themselves either with elections or politics in the Italian kingdom. They found the Pope at first intransigent, but by representing the evil effects to be expected from a Socialist régime they obtained a relaxation of the prohibition, and for the first time in the history of united Italy priests and monks were seen in their robes going to the urns.²² Only two officially "clerical" deputies were elected, but they were the first to enter the Camera, and the organization which had sent them could boast of having exerted strong influence on the elections of other Members of Parliament. In any case, Giolitti had a sound number of supporters—supporters whose views could not possess any harmony in themselves, and whose choice could hardly be regarded as entirely consistent with his Liberal aims, but still, supporters, whose personal allegiance appeared at first unshakable.

Unfortunately, however, an issue arose which rapidly pro-

uced something like a crisis. It concerned the railways, which had for some time been under the administration of private companies and were now to be resumed, or partially, resumed by the State. Though the Government would have preferred no compromise on their administration, it was under the necessity of drafting some new regulations for the employees; and in February 1905 it submitted a Bill to the Camera containing provisions designed to improve their conditions but forbid the right to strike.²³ Granted the recent controversies over the question, such an attempt to prevent interruption of an important public service was not reactionary. But it provoked a storm among the parties of the Extreme Left and violent agitation among the railway employees. Declaring that it represented an attempt to "rivet the chains of slavery,"²⁴ they proclaimed a policy of "obstructionism" on all the railway lines in Italy and dealt a successful blow not only at communications but at commerce and industry as well. Events seemed to be drifting towards a general strike, and Giolitti—embarrassed equally by the exasperation of the public and the demands of the workers—decided to resign. He was, he said, suffering from a severe nervous depression which required a long period of absolute rest and repose."²⁵ It is probable that he was still feeling the effects of a recent attack of influenza; but it is certain that he did not wish to commit himself to any decision in so awkward a situation. Having warmly upheld the cause of workers' rights in his programme of government, he could not now oppose the railwaymen without losing his reputation. Equally he could not allow them to dominate the government. Accordingly a flight from power was the most convenient method of preparing a triumphant return to it later.²⁶

Giolitti's abrupt disappearance from the scene left the greatest confusion behind. For his departure did more than deprive the Cabinet of its chief; it disintegrated its supporters. He had been so essentially the centrifugal force uniting the majority that without him it could scarcely exist. "Round whom did the majority unite?" asked Barzilai, addressing the remnant of the ministry; and, supplying the obvious answer, he added: "Round Giolitti. Politically speaking, you lived by

reflected light, and now that the largest planet of your system has disappeared you are left in darkness. . . . You can no longer say the majority is for you . . .”²⁷ Indeed, Fortis (whom Giolitti had designated as his successor) found himself confronted with insuperable difficulties in forming a Cabinet, and the King had perforce to reconfirm the resigning ministers in their positions and give the “interim” portfolio of Premier to Tittoni. But even Tittoni could not succeed in holding office. He miscalculated both the feelings of the Camera and the kind of strategy the situation demanded. His first speech as Premier was a *tour de force* in cleverness without sincerity; and the Camera, still smarting from the effects of Giolittian “cleverness,” received it with sharp and impatient criticism.²⁸ The deputies were moreover provoked to outright hostility by his maladroit references to the clericals’ participation in the elections—references designed to gratify the Conservatives, but in reality wounding to the dignity of the Camera as a whole.²⁹ With an unfavourable vote of 273 against 88 his ministry was forced to resign, and the King had to resort again to Fortis.

Fortis was a gifted Romagnuolo, possessing both an acute and ready mind and a remarkable power of speech. It was mainly his political antecedents that had hindered his career. For beginning as an associate of the Republicans he had become both a monarchist and a follower of Crispi, and this conversion had made him distasteful both to the Extreme Left and the Left as a whole. During one brief period he had been Minister for Agriculture under Pelloux, but for the most part had been shunned, remaining in a political obscurity which his talents had certainly done nothing to merit. Not that the obscurity had disturbed him. Indolent by nature and serenely lacking in ambition, he had something like a temperamental disinclination for work, and absence of office was to him also absence of fatigue, effort, and responsibility. Besides he was from the very first a political sceptic, carrying little doctrinal luggage in his intelligent head and assisting at passionate conflicts over ideological formula with polite but tepid enthusiasm. He could, if he had chosen, have been an important leader; he did not choose. As he had served Crispi, so (with

more reserve and detachment) he served Giolitti, assuming the position of Premier but without endeavouring to associate his personality with his work or express in public affairs a characteristic policy. And yet there was never any doubt of the quality of the man. It was enough to hear him speak, enough to listen to his vivid, balanced sentences, his penetrating arguments, to know that he was no mere satellite or politician of mediocre stamp.³⁰

The first question to confront him was inevitably that of the railways. It was necessary to resolve both the problem of the employees' right to strike and that of the State or private administration of the railway lines. The first point Fortis dealt with firmly but skilfully. In a law concerning the railways presented to the Camera on 8th April, 1905, the word "strike" was meticulously avoided, but the railwaymen were instead officially and legally classified as "civil servants." As such, "those employees who voluntarily abandoned their work or lent their support to attempts to disturb the continuity and regularity of the service were to be considered dismissed, and have their places filled by others."³¹ Certain of the Socialists protested bitterly against the provision; others accepted the view of Colajanni that since the railwaymen had accepted the pensions and privileges of civil servants they must also accept their duties. In general, the Camera supported Fortis's view that the functioning of public services must, in the interest of the community as a whole, be guaranteed.³² The law was voted by 289 votes to 45, and the Railwaymen's Committee observing that further resistance was useless ordered the cessation of the strike.

Unfortunately Fortis did not show the same aptitude in arranging for the transference of the lines to State administration. To tell the truth, he was not very interested in the question. He knew little or nothing about the technicalities of railway finance, and (characteristically) he did not want the bother of finding out.³³ So he allowed himself to be guided by his general regard for the business world, and when the three southern companies (more especially the Adriatic Company) asked an iniquitous sum in liquidation of their rights, accepted it. In this way the State was pledged to pay the Societa

Mediterranea, Adriatica e Sicula the sum of half a milliard. It was a transaction so carelessly concluded and so confused in calculation that insinuations of all kinds were made against the Cabinet.³⁴ And though Fortis was personally honest, he could not quite escape the resultant odium. In the Camera opposition was so animated that he had to "postpone the issue for further consideration" and hope that in the interim something would occur to induce a compromise on the part of the companies. Actually, the railway question was put in the background in the interim by the question of renewing the commercial agreement with Spain; and in this case, too, his policy was disastrously influenced by his tendency to confuse the economics of business men with the economics of the nation. In order to facilitate the export of silk, hemp and marble, he agreed to reduce the import duty on Spanish wines from 20 to 12 lire a hectolitre.³⁵ This was an implicit blow to the wine industries of the South; and worse still (from the Government's point of view) it was an implicit blow to the wine industries of Tuscany and the North. Where the Southern provinces might ultimately have resigned themselves, the North energetically rebelled. In the pitched battle which took place in the Camera the opponents of the Ministry obtained the victory, and after an unfavourable order of the day (293 votes to 135) Fortis handed in his resignation.

The King invited him to form a second Cabinet. For Giolitti was not yet ready to return to power, and Fortis still seemed the personality most likely to reconstitute the Giolittian majority. But from the beginning it was uphill and almost hopeless work. Opposed by the Extreme Right and by the Extreme Left he was also opposed by a nucleus of Zanardelli's old followers, and in the end succeeded only in putting together a Cabinet of mediocrities among whom the Marquis di San Giuliano shone in solitary brilliance. For the rest the Ministry was ill-received by the Camera—not alone because it was a patchwork affair with an improvised and nebulous programme, but because it was surrounded with an atmosphere of political jobbery, of secret dealings with the banks and big financial interests. It was, in short, suspect as a government before it had even begun to function; and when Fortis presented it to

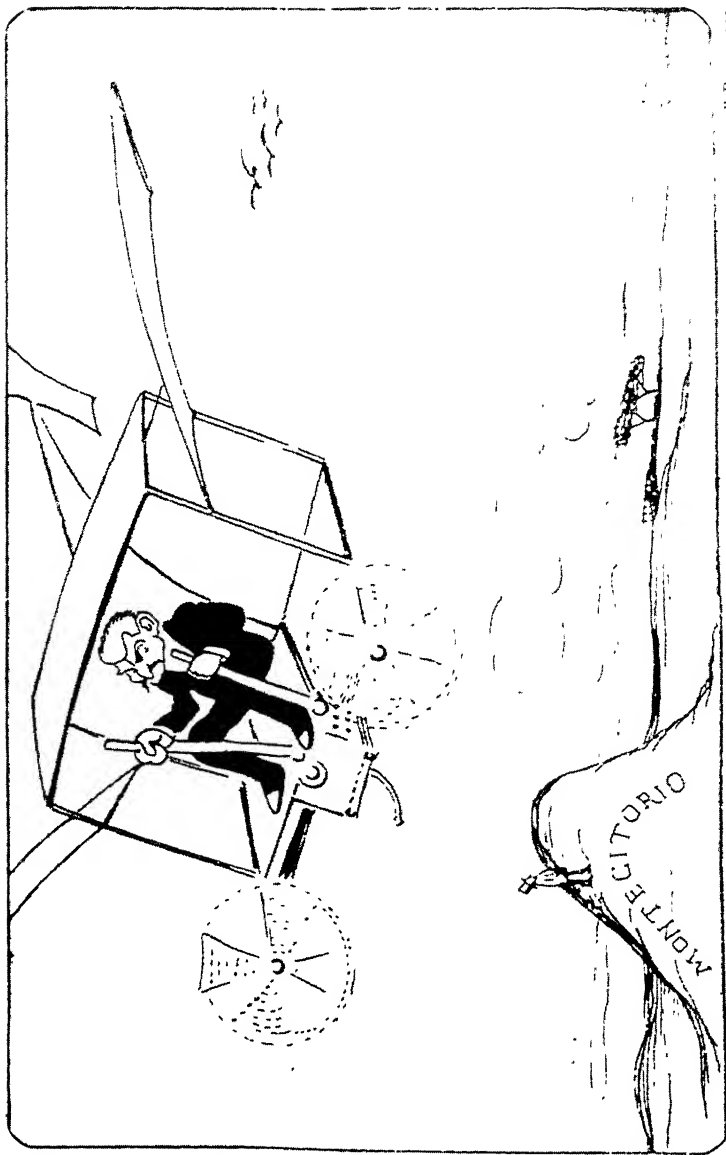
the Camera it was killed by the most effective of all weapons—laughter.³⁶ In a speech as witty as it was politically penetrating, Barzilai revealed the hopeless inconsistencies in the Cabinet's composition; and his light artillery was followed by the heavy guns of Sonnino, invoking whatever sense of obligation the Deputies felt regarding their function.³⁷ After this not even Giolitti could save the situation. Coming forward at the last moment in the firm conviction that since the Camera was one he himself had helped to elect, it must of necessity recognize its master's voice, he too, was met with laughter, interjections, and comment.³⁸ The more seriously he tried to speak the louder the noise became, and on the 1st February, 1905, the Cabinet, after an adverse vote of 221 to 188, had no choice but to accept defeat.

Fortis, it must be added, took his discomfiture in good part, and shortly before his death in 1908 regained his reputation in a magnificent speech on the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But at this moment his defeat was more than a personal one. It was considered also a defeat of the subterranean wire-pulling and petty arts of corruption implicit in the Giolittian system. Fortis, men said, had been Giolitti's lieutenant; to reject him was to reject Giolitti, and (even more than this) to affirm faith in a régime of integrity and sincere representative character.³⁹ Public opinion outside Parliament seemed at long last to have found an echo within it, and Deputies and people united on an issue of general concern. On the 2nd February, 1906, it was said, "a new Italy had found its expression," and inspired by the general return of good faith and optimism, no one remembered how a similar slogan had once raised—and broken—the Ministry of Zanardelli.

Indeed, men's hopes now seemed strengthened by the rise to the Premiership of Sidney Sonnino. For Sonnino was unquestionably a man of culture, learning and research, puritanically honest, inexhaustibly energetic and profoundly anxious to improve the lot of the agricultural classes. Trained first in the diplomatic service he had been secretary in the Italian Embassy at Madrid, Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, but, subsequently sacrificing his diplomatic career, had turned to

the study of social questions and produced both a valuable study of the *mezzadria* system in Tuscany and (in collaboration with Franchetti) a classic work on *La Sicilia nel 1876*.⁴⁰ In politics he was, somewhat vaguely, classified as belonging to the Centre; but he had fought hard for universal suffrage and had striven repeatedly to better the conditions of the peasantry in the South, and though he had once given his support to the reactionaries was known to be a man of liberal and unprejudiced views. Indeed, finding himself at the head of a group opposed to Giolitti's internal policy he had recently investigated its effects, and announced his conversion to the view that a Liberal régime was necessary in internal affairs. He seemed therefore a natural focal point for the reforming elements in the Camera, and when called on to form a Cabinet had no difficulty in composing one of exceptionally intelligent and competent men. He suffered, however, from certain drawbacks in dealing with Parliament. Naturally a solitary character, his years of research had isolated him still further so that he found communication of any kind difficult. He had besides more knowledge of books than of men, and was too rigidly honest to stoop to the arts which may conquer a group of facile adherents in politics.⁴¹ Lastly, he was a bad speaker. And in a Parliament where eloquence and grace of delivery were a *sine qua non* of debate his arid, brusque discourse produced a chilling effect. Seeing him now issue forth from his study armed chiefly with reforms and humanitarian convictions, the sceptics wondered how long he would last—"Don Quixote," said someone unhappily.⁴²

Still, his Cabinet was individually a strong one. It included Salandra (Finance), Guicciardina (Foreign Affairs), Luzzatto (Treasury), Boselli (Public Instruction), and Alfredo Baccarelli (Post and Telegraphs). Above all, it included the Radical leader Ettore Sacchi and the Republican Edoardo Pantano, men who had hitherto obstinately refused to enter any government whatever. Their collaboration was a sign of a new spirit in a group of Socialists from the Extreme Left. This group had in fact decided provisionally to give Sonnino their vote, putting the Ministry (as they said) to the test of events, reserving the right to combat it on any issue opposed



From "Pasquino," Rome, 1909

THE HON. SONNIO FORMS HIS CABINET

Sonnio (in aeronave): "Dear Gholiti, *this* time I shall keep you down."

popular liberty.⁴³ Perhaps the acquisition of their support made Sonnino a little careless about the other bases of his majority. Certainly he omitted—and it was a very grave omission—to secure any representatives in his Cabinet of the so-called “Democratic Left,” i.e. that section of the Left which had in the main supported Zanardelli. As a result his majority lacked what might have been called an intermediate term.⁴⁴ The Extreme Right was (naturally) distrustful of the new Radical Ministers; the support of the Radicals was at best provisional; and the Moderate group felt itself unnecessarily excluded. The elements of disaster were in fact implicit in the Cabinet’s constitution; but Sonnino, trusting to the excellence of his work (which was incontestable) and the uprightness of his administration (which was almost ferocious) was too preoccupied to observe them.⁴⁵ He announced that he intended to make no use whatever of the “secret funds” (usually used by Premiers to corrupt the Press and the electorate) and proceeded to outline “the widest and most harmonious programme of reforms that had been known for many years.”

In accordance with it a careful study was to be made of the railway problem, so that the claims of the companies might be liquidated as rationally as possible; a series of well-planned and organic measures was to be enacted for the benefit of the South, so that its “varied and complex aggregate of problems” should receive the assistance they merited: special efforts were to be made regarding education, so as actively to combat and diminish the hold of illiteracy: a modification of the taxation system was to help small property owners and encourage the development of intensive agriculture: a special experiment was to be made with internal colonization and the redemption of barren regions: and a special law regarding the communal councils in the provinces was to prevent Government interference in their functioning and safeguard them from illegitimate Government pressure (i.e. suppress once for all a favourite method of electoral and political corruption). Finally a Bill was to be prepared safeguarding more effectively the liberty of the Press.⁴⁶ It would, in short, have been difficult to find a series of provisions more logically and effectively planned.

Unfortunately, however, they failed to attract the support

in Parliament necessary to actuate them. Almost from the first day, Sonnino's majority (like Zanardelli's) began to crumble, while the daily ebb and flow of debate receded increasingly from his reform projects to circulate round personal or partisan issues. The Socialists especially felt themselves ill at ease in their new rôle of supporters of the Government. It was a rôle contrary to their habits and inconsistent with the formulae which they had for years been propagating among the masses.⁴⁷ They were, moreover, irritated at the very beginning of Sonnino's Ministry by the repression of certain disturbances which had occurred among the peasants of the Senese. The episode seemed to open a rift between them and the Government, and it was widened by the behaviour of the Socialist Party outside Parliament, who had rejected constitutional methods and now hastened to repudiate also any Socialists who supported the Government. This meant that while Sonnino gained no further adherents among the Moderate Left he lost them from month to month among the Extremists; and just at this time, when the good effects of his foreign policy at Algiers were being disregarded, and his programme of reforms had lost the attraction of novelty, the Camera was suddenly roused to vehement debate by the occurrence of a crisis at Turin.

In May 1906 certain Turinese workmen went on strike to secure a reduction of their working hours. In the course of one of their demonstrations a conflict occurred between the forces of the State and the crowds, stones were thrown, and in the process of restoring order one of the strikers was killed. A general strike was immediately declared by way of protest, and disturbances (more or less serious) occurred in Bologna, Milan, Venice, and Rome.⁴⁸ Interrogated in Parliament, it was in vain that Sonnino pointed out that the crowds had been stimulated by agitators, and that no crowd could, *ipso facto* and *per se*, be allowed to dominate a situation irrespective of the merits of the issue it was disputing.⁴⁹ The parliamentary Socialists were frankly in a dilemma. On the one hand their doctrine ranged them of necessity on the side of the workers; on the other hand their promise to support the Government and follow a constructive policy in Parliament made it difficult

for them to adopt a merely censorious attitude. They decided in the end that Turati should bring before the Camera a Bill for the "prevention of proletarian massacres." The Bill did not (unfortunately) envisage any method for the prevention of proletarian attacks on public servants in the discharge of their duty; it was not presented in a manner consonant with parliamentary procedure; and finally it appeared to the Government to be somewhat out of touch with facts. "I do not," said Sonnino, "admit that there have been, or that there can be, proletarian massacres in Italy"⁵⁰—and in fact the Camera by 199 votes to 28 rejected even the discussion of the Bill. Whereupon the Socialists in a solid group of thirty-three handed in their resignation as Deputies, and the Government was at a blow deprived of one of its most important sources of support. Indeed, it was now in the position of a minority in the Camera, and could expect only a brief respite before its enemies administered the *coup de grâce*. It was only Sonnino who retained illusions as to its capacity to survive. He did so because he did not believe that in the last resort the Deputies would sacrifice a great national interest to a party vendetta. Proudly conscious of the achievements he was preparing, and convinced that others must be ready at least impartially to recognize them, he scarcely troubled to take account of his majority, repeating Zanardelli's mistake of imagining that good reforms must logically make their way in Parliament. Actually the clericals at this time were fomenting opposition because they mistrusted not only Sonnino's personal rationalism but the anti-clericalism of his two Radical Ministers, while the business world was secretly chafing over the imminent publication of the inquiry into the Ministry of Marine, and the Moderate Left was only wanting an opportunity to revenge the slight of its exclusion. The pretext which this hostile majority found was somewhat petty, but it served.⁵¹ Sonnino wanted the new railway convention (which was meant to liquidate the private companies' claims on the railways) to be discussed with as little delay as possible; by 179 votes to 152 the Deputies approved an order of the day refusing to set any time limit to the work of the Commission preparing the Bill.⁵² And thus signally defeated, the Ministry had no

choice but to offer its resignation. Its epitaph was curiously dramatic. For an independent Socialist rising impetuously to his feet paid Sonnino the highest tribute in his power. "The Ministry," he cried, "has fallen a victim to its honesty."⁵³ Actually the words were more appropriate to Zanardelli's fall than to Sonnino's; for though Sonnino had certainly offended many factions and interests by his unswerving reformist zeal, he had lost the support of others simply by failing to try and secure it. In short, it was not alone his rectitude that had been disastrous, but his temperament and his inherent love of reticence and seclusion. With all his humanitarian interests it was said that he neither felt enthusiasm himself nor understood enthusiasm in others; and his inability either to touch people's imaginations or stir their feelings was indicative of a fundamental weakness in him as a political leader. Indeed, even a sympathetic critic applied to him the words of Depasse: "he escapes from people . . . speaks little . . . and when anyone permits himself a question, prefers not to reply, or to reply with one of those abrupt blows which cut short a conversation. . . . He has the art of knowing how to surround his person with a kind of military zone, which it is given to only a few friends to surpass. . . . It is not easy to undertake the adventure of crossing that barren and desert terrain, which seems to lead only to a large fosse, surrounded by a high, enclosing wall. . . . And it is within this enclosure that the man lives. . . . If one has the courage or the good fortune to arrive there, one finds a man of real and profound kindness, with a warm heart ready to stand all tests . . . but it is necessary to arrive—and that is not easy."⁵⁴ In short, a character less suited to the exigencies of parliamentary combat it would have been difficult to discover.

His fall made the return of Giolitti almost inevitable, for there was no other personality outstanding enough to combat the Giolittian system, or revive confidence in a reformist campaign that had (for the second time) been shown to lack extrinsic strength. Indeed, the fall of Sonnino had shown again (if it needed showing) that nothing could be achieved in the Camera by the formulation of a reform policy minus the formulation of a sincere and stable reform party; and it

had shown further that the elements for such a party did not exist—at least in a Parliament elected by a Pellouxian or Giolittian methods. The Deputies (like the public) were not averse to hearing the word “reform”; they listened with pleasure to disquisitions on the necessity of improving and regenerating the condition of the poorer classes; but they did not want any radical experiments which should disturb the texture of collective life. Indeed, the technique most likely to encounter success in Parliament was that of building a general policy from the particular interests of the individual groups.⁵⁵ The groups and their interests resembled the pieces of a mosaic, pieces already cut and chiselled to a certain shape, and imposing on the artist the form and nature of his design. Giolitti, as we have seen, had a particular genius for fitting such pieces into a harmonious pattern. He wanted in 1901, chiefly to govern the country; if at the same time the country could be reformed, he was willing, even anxious, to reform it; but he had no intention of sacrificing personal power to idealistic aspirations. The different parties were to be skilfully manœuvred into the position of clientele; and their demands were to be met by a carefully adjusted series of measures which should favour now one and now another, without leaving any entirely dissatisfied. This was indeed to go on with the support of nearly the whole of Parliament;⁵⁶ it was moreover to satisfy the whole of Parliament; and so that if the general public was concerned any dissatisfaction which it might feel could always be met by admitting it, too, to a share in the system of personal favours. Generally speaking, the only vulnerable point in the arrangement was that it might lead to a conflict between irreconcilable but simultaneous and urgent demands—a conflict which Giolitti would certainly find it embarrassing to resolve. But for the moment such a conflict was not in sight, and the nature of his political position made him peculiarly master of the situation. Democrat by instinct, he was nevertheless quite ready to consider the feelings and convictions of the Conservatives; a member of the majority and an upholder of its philosophy, he felt no difficulty in conciliating the clericals; a moderate by practice and good temperament, he was disposed to maintain good relations

the Socialists; and finally was by no means averse to a friendly understanding with the Radicals, so long as they did not bother him too much.⁵⁷ As for the banks and the industrial world, long experience had made him familiar with the deference and consideration which moneyed interests usually receive from the governments of enlightened democratic states. These things were enough in themselves to explain why from 1906 to 1909 he remained serenely omnipotent, carrying parliamentary institutions one stage further in decomposition, but retaining his leadership unchallenged. Men no longer had the faith to rebel, and the nation as a whole passed rapidly from the hopefulness and interest which it had felt towards Sonnino and Zanardelli to the scepticism and indifference which was its habitual attitude in parliamentary life. For Zanardelli's failure had been more than the failure of a régime; it had been the failure of the best in Italy, which, momentarily resurrected by Sonnino, was now definitely lacking in the stamina and strength to rise again. The Estrema, beginning its public life with all the firework brilliance of obstructionism, had come to accept the terms and vices of its environment; and the Socialists, though they had ruined two reformist Ministries had not thereby acquired the experience either to formulate a constructive policy or adopt a coherent attitude in parliamentary debate. From every aspect the situation was composed not of forces but of weaknesses; and it was on its weaknesses that Giolitti founded his régime.

He began by composing a fairly strong Cabinet, the most outstanding characteristic of which was its homogeneity. For though the most enlightened men of the Right still adhered to Sonnino, he had little difficulty in winning over the Moderate Left element which his predecessor had so heedlessly passed by. Tittoni was again given Foreign Affairs, Massimino was called to Finance, Majorana to the Treasury, Gianturco to Public Works, Schanzer to Post and Telegraphs, General Vignano to War, and Vice-Admiral Mirabello to Marine. Almost all these men and the remaining Ministers belonged either to the Left or to the Centre, and if there was no uniformity of opinion among them, there was at least no active dissension. They represented a more stable ministeria

combination than had appeared before Parliament for years, and their stability emerged with success from the imposed on it by the legacies of Sonnino's Government. Obviously the many and substantial reforms presented by Sonnino could not be simply jettisoned.⁵⁸ Some would have to be actuated, and it was not easy to seize on the harmless and (from a realistic point of view) the most indispensable. It would for instance have been unwise to try to smother the results of the Inquiry into the Ministry of Marine and they were given due prominence; it would have been dangerous to abandon the provisions for the Question of the South, and they were retained. For the rest, Giolitti was careful not to furnish his stall with what could only be unmarketable goods. His programme of government was for the most part concerned with the problem which "at the moment dominates all others"—the "improvement of the working classes." On this theme he was eloquent. "The future of our civilization, the prosperity and greatness of our country depend," he said, "on the moral and material improvement . . . the ordered, constant, and pacific improvement of the most numerous classes in society. Two things must tend to render this progress ordered and secure—legislative reform and the action of the Government."⁵⁹ After so general a pronouncement it would have seemed almost churlish to dwell on details of practical policy—more especially as the Government hastened to set up two special Commissions of Inquiry into the condition of miners in Sardegnna and the condition of labourers in the Southern provinces and Sicily. Practical policy, it might be supposed, would follow the results of the inquiries, and if the inquiries were extremely lengthy it was (no doubt) because they were extremely profound. Meanwhile so long as they lasted no one could complain of neglect—even the South, which saw Sonnino's provisions for increasing elementary education deprived of any financial aid from the State, and so reduced to a nullity. The general impression of Governmental activity was moreover strengthened by the pieces of work left practically complete by Sonnino—the liquidating of private administration of the railways and the conversion of the National Debt. Although the first was

measure which had served Sonnino's enemies as a pretext for his downfall, it was now found to be excellently designed and passed the Camera with flying colours. As for the Bill regarding the conversion of the National Debt⁶⁰ (the credit for which belonged chiefly to Luzzatti, Minister for Finance in Sonnino's Cabinet), it represented so great an achievement in national finance that scenes of almost delirious enthusiasm greeted its announcement in the Camera, and the country in general celebrated the day as a species of financial liberation.⁶¹

Finally, apart from these questions there was the question of the Inquiry into the Ministry of Marine, and here Giolitti was able to turn an apparently dangerous issue to good account. For by good fortune a Socialist had been a member of the Commission, and its findings were so damaging that not even the Socialists could refuse new credits for improving the fleet. In this way the Government was able to provide for a much-needed reorganization of national defence without incurring the traditional reproach of being "militarist" or desirous of adventures abroad. For how was it possible to ignore the results of a parliamentary inquiry that had lasted two years, had published a five-volume report, and had included among its directors a representative of the workers' party? And how was it possible to ignore the fact that the Ministry of Marine (in order to favour the Terni Steelworks Company) had paid excessive sums for the construction of cruisers of inferior quality and even accepted shells and cannons of an inferior type? These were points that, appearing in the official debates in the Camera in June and July 1906, produced a grievous impression on the country and inspired the majority of Deputies with a general wish both to limit further discussion and to bring about a root and branch reform of the department concerned.⁶²

Their attitude showed Giolitti that something might also be done to reorganize the army, provided the matter were strategically approached. And in fact he demonstrated his knowledge of the psychology of Parliament by avoiding a direct request for military expenditure and suggesting an inquiry into the Ministry of War instead.⁶³ When the Camera had enthusiastically accepted the idea it appeared that distin-

guished members of the Opposition would naturally see members of the Reporting Commission; and not long this the actual Minister for War, General Vignano, resigned and his folio was—for the first time in Italian history—to a civilian, Senator Casana. Questioned by the Press the reason for his abrupt resignation, the general hastily explained that “a civilian Minister may be very useful to the Department of War at this moment. A civilian Minister has more power to obtain what is necessary to national defence.”⁶⁴ In other words, no one could accuse a distinguished civilian either of biasing the Commission in its investigation or being a military bureaucrat intent on the aggrandisement of his department. And indeed, when the Commission assembled and verified all the relative data it had no choice but to admit the unpleasant truth—that successive governments (frightened of the Estrema’s opposition and the socialists’ cry of “unproductive expense”) had allowed the military organization to fall into a serious state of arrears, so that to revise it was a matter of genuine urgency. When the interests of national defence were at stake, Casana in June 1908 presented to the Camera a Bill asking for a credit of 223 millions distributed over the period from 1908 to 1917. An opposing day contrary to the project was rejected by 230 votes. Casana’s Bill was approved, and Giolitti could boast of having secured a reform which hardly one of the preceding governments (certainly not that of the unbending Sonnino) even had hoped to obtain.

Meanwhile, however, his Ministry had been meeting ill-luck of an unforeseen nature. Already in August 1906 the Minister for Education had been compelled to resign on reasons of health; in March 1907 Gallo, Minister for Justice, and Massimini, Minister for Finance, died; two months later the Minister for the Treasury became too ill to continue work; and in November 1907 Gianturco, Minister for Public Works, passed away at Naples.⁶⁵ The loss of his brilliant personality was a great blow to the Ministry, and it occurred at a particularly unpropitious time, when the exposure of discreditable episodes in public life had contributed to a gloom on Giolitti’s name. The first of these scandal

occurred already in April, when the "propaganda" had launched a series of accusations against the Deputy P. Romano, representative of the constituency of Sessa Aurunca. Romano, it was said, was the leader of the Camorra of Aversa—a "seller of votes and parliamentary seats." In the end, and after a good deal of agitation, the charges were made the object of a special investigation, and Romano was acquitted. But it was rumoured, and later asserted in Parliament, that he was protected by Giolitti for "electoral reasons."⁶⁶ And while such a rumour certainly did not aid Giolitti's reputation, its evil effect on the prestige of parliamentary institutions was strengthened by the scandal arising from the trial of the ex-Minister for Education, Nasi.

This scandal was not new, since Nasi had been accused of misappropriating the funds of his department as early as 1904. But the details of legal prosecution had dragged on, and had in fact only reached their last stages in June–November 1907. The actual trial aroused intense feeling; and if anything had been wanting to complete men's disillusionment regarding political life, the evidence given in the course of it would have been sufficient. It showed not only that the ex-minister was guilty, but that he was primarily the instrument of an intricate and permanent system of departmental corruption. As such his fate aroused some pity. The fact that Giolitti was known to be his opponent was (rightly or wrongly) thought to have influenced his fate, and voices were not wanting to hint that others had done worse things and enjoyed the privileges of power . . .⁶⁷

Still, these dangers to the Giolittian system were somewhat offset by the increasing success of his *rapprochement* with the clericals. Perceiving the influence they had exerted at the elections of June 1904, the Pope (though he had reconfirmed that *non expedit* decree) had nevertheless in June 1905 decided that Italian bishops might judge where in individual cases the participation of Catholics in the elections was necessary "for the salvation of the supreme good of society." In short, the clericals might be expected to strengthen their hold in the country from year to year, and Giolitti's policy had recently shown his appreciation of the fact. In June 1907, to everyone's

surprise, military honours were paid to the Bishop of Lucca on his return from being made a cardinal; not long after a special warship was despatched to Reggio Calabria in honour of the religious festival of St. Vincent: and an even more significant gesture—a great number of officers in the army and navy were interrogated as to whether they had any connection with masonry.⁶⁸ Protests from Liberal Deputies in parliament regarding this inquisition were met by evasions, and a general statement from the Minister of Marine to the effect that adherence to secret associations was not always compatible with the requirements of naval discipline. And these things were followed by a debate on the question of abolishing religious instruction in elementary schools. It was an issue that had been hanging fire for some years and was now brought to a decisive point by Bissolati, the most courageous and idealistic of the parliamentary Socialists. He found little support in the Camera. For although nuclei of liberals throughout the country had been stubbornly resisting clericalism, had succeeded in gaining control of many of the communal councils, and had recently obtained the election of a mason as Mayor of Rome, the Liberals at Montecitorio felt themselves bound by the threat of clerical reprisals at the polls. Most Deputies preferred to be discreetly non-committal in their attitude, and even among the members of the Estrema and the general groups of the Left there were very few who felt themselves sufficiently independent to show enthusiasm either for Bissolati's speech or that of F. Martini, ex-Governor of Tripoli, who, though not a Socialist, fearlessly upheld the cause of freedom of conscience.⁶⁹

Giolitti and Rava (Minister for Education) proposed a compromise; they proposed, that is to say, that religious teaching should be given those pupils whose parents had explicitly asked for it. Actually this was to leave the Church in possession of the field, since there would obviously be few mothers who would not accept their confessors' advice on the point. And indeed the clericals, after some hesitation, expressed their satisfaction with the expedient. It was voted by 279 votes to 129, and among those who gave it their support were some of the most important and influential leaders of the masons.

Perhaps on the whole Giolitti summed up the general view when he said that "only two systems are possible: forbid religious instruction, make it obligatory, or leave it free for those who want it. We believe the most liberal path to be that which corresponds to the sentiments of the immense majority of Italians."⁷⁰

This attitude was undoubtedly valuable to the Government when in March 1909 the much-dreaded elections took place. Clerical influence among the electors was on the side of Giolitti, and apart from the indirect pressure it exerted was able to secure the election of twenty-four clerical Deputies whose sense of obligation to the Premier must have been sincere. Even discounting their potential sympathy, moreover Giolitti enjoyed a notable victory at the polls. For he "made the elections with a ruthless skill that stifled opposition. The methods employed were much the same as those used in the time of Depretis. Regulations for the maintenance of public order were arbitrarily enforced or relaxed so as best to suit the interests of the Government candidate; contracts for public works were assigned to those who knew best how to ensure the Government of their "trustworthiness"; public officials were either threatened with the loss of promotion or promise it irrespective of their merits; the prefects of the province with the mayors of the towns and villages received instruction as to the kind of "result" expected from the region under their control; and, in short, every kind of secret pressure was used."⁷¹

It might have been thought the result would leave Giolitti in an impregnable position. But in actuality the new Chamber showed itself far less docile than the old, and opposition began to gather strength at once. This was not due to any special innovation or movement towards reform on Giolitti's part. His programme of government could not have been more discreetly vague, or more deserving of Barzilai's sarcastic analysis. "Giolitti," said the latter, "has published an electoral programme which I read yesterday on the official Gazette. It is the following—Peace, Justice, Liberty, Education, Agriculture and Public Works . . . really, if you change the word 'Peace' into the word 'War,' you have simply the names of the various

ministerial Departments, neither more nor less; i.e. the honourable Giolitti's programme is the maintenance of public order and the discharge of the ordinary affairs of government. . . . This would be much for an administrator; it is too little for the first minister in the Cabinet . . . round this programme is easy to rally six or seven sections of the Camera, the more so as I do not know anyone who does not desire peace, is against justice and liberty, or has the perversity not to desire education, or is the sworn enemy of agricultural and public works. . . . What then may we expect in Parliament? . . . The honourable Giolitti is like the debtor who always had the courtesy to acknowledge his debts, contenting himself with never paying them . . ."⁷² In short, the Premier's methods of retaining his majority were still the same as in his second ministry—the formulation of vague phrases acceptable to everyone, the avoidance of any decisive or definite project, and a general emphasis on ties of personal obligation rather than on political conviction. In this way he hoped to recruit adherents ranging in a solid bloc from the benches of the Extreme Right to those of the Extreme Left, forming rather "congregation" than a party, and receiving its leader's directions with the submissive goodwill of parishioners obeying their pastor. It was in vain that sincere thinkers like Barzilai described the results of such a system. "All of us," he said, "feel that the Parliament is becoming too isolated from the country's life and sympathy . . . that it is becoming too much thing-in-itself . . . because there are here too many conflicts of ideas . . . too little idealism . . . and too few conflicts based on sincerity of opinion. Faced with the dilemma, Parliament or revolution, we, who still have some faith in Parliament, do not wish to stand aside from its regeneration or reconstitution . . ." There were indeed Deputies who agreed with his views, and might even have been ready to fight for them had there been any possibility of stirring up a general reformist campaign. But in a Camera where a great number of the "representatives of the people" owed their election to Government graft, the prospect of such a campaign was remote. And in point of fact the revolt which was brewing against the Giolittian system had very different origins. It was

due chiefly to two things: Tittoni's tactlessness in foreign affairs, and the materialization of the one situation likely to menace the Premier's methods—a clash of equally important and conflicting demands.

Tittoni's mistake consisted in trying to represent the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a success for Italian diplomacy.⁷³ Actually the annexation was so flagrant a contravention of Italy's interest that it roused a movement of indignation throughout the peninsula; and in the face of this feeling Tittoni's efforts (in a speech at Desio, October 1908) to treat the news as a species of "national good tidings" were simply adding insult to injury. Still, Giolitti managed to save him from the Camera's wrath, and the Government appeared to have saved its position, when there occurred a difficulty over settling the new Convention regarding the Mercantile Marine.

The Convention had been drafted shortly after the refusal of the Compagnia Navigazione Generale to continue with the postal and mercantile marine services. It was designed to establish an agreement between the Government and the steamship company "Lloyd Italiano," and its terms—now provoking the ire of Parliament—were a technical improvement on previous conventions. The controversial point was that they guaranteed the Lloyd some (not very justifiable) financial advantages, and that they tended to sacrifice the interests of the South Italian, especially Sicilian, ports. Probably the matter would not have assumed the dimensions of a major political issue if it had not provoked the vigorous criticism of Sonnino. In a cutting analysis of its defects⁷⁴ he showed how far it failed to protect the Treasury, and, stimulated by his attacks and by the obvious blow the Bill would give certain financial groups, the opposition suddenly and unexpectedly coalesced. The most Giolitti could do was to parry the coming blow by withdrawing the proposed convention and asking time to draft new provisions. This delay enabled him to enter undefeated on the parliamentary vacation and prepare the necessary strategy for a good exit—strategy which took the form of a reorganization of the taxation system in favour of the poorer classes.⁷⁵ Fundamentally and organically redis-

ributing certain of the fiscal burdens, he touched some of the most sensitive spots in the bourgeoisie armour and produced

Bill quite unlikely to get beyond a first reading. In point of fact opposition was shown even in nominating a Commission to report on its merits; and, seizing the excuse (though the opposition was neither formally nor constitutionally decisive), he resigned. Objectively considered, what other course was open to a democratic Premier frustrated in his efforts to champion the cause of the people?

THE "GIOLITTIAN SYSTEM" AND THE
LIBYAN WAR

As Giolitti, despite his flight, was still the most influential personâity in politics, his advice was inevitably asked regarding the choice of a successor. In accordance with his usual practice of indicating a representative of the Right (who would *ipso facto* throw into relief his own Liberal views) he indicated Sonnino—and Sonnino was ill-advised enough to accept the premiership. Perhaps he did not realize how greatly circumstances had changed since he had fallen from power, and how little possibility there was of reviving the goodwill which had once surrounded his plans. Indeed, his Cabinet was doomed from the outset.¹ Giolitti's henchmen were still devoted to his régime, and none of the important Left groups felt any wish to detach themselves from his majority in order to support a clearly ephemeral Ministry.² They were willing to keep a truce while Sonnino formed his Cabinet, but once it was formed they began to work for its end. And Sonnino had not the necessary mental agility to make the right response to their attitude; he did not want to ask the King for that appeal to the country which (if honestly held) might have given him a sincere and stable bloc of adherents.³ He remained aloof, working on his new programme of government, and omitting to consider whether the measures he was drafting did or did not appeal to the interests of this or that group of Deputies. . . . As before, he believed tenaciously in the excellence of the reforms as such, considering them as sufficient in themselves and not in need of garnishing with gifts or the distribution of particular favours.⁴ On the 18th February he presented an admirable and wide programme of government, including provisions for the reform of elementary education and local taxation—both designed to suit the country, but to do so without regard to the susceptibilities of Montecitorio.⁵ Taken by themselves one or two of his measures might have found a welcome; taken together as a complex whole they



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LUZZATTI, PREMIER, PRESENTS AN ELECTORAL REFORM; BEHIND HIM, GIOIOTTI
WILL BE HIS SUCCESSOR

Luzzatti (Gigione). "Is there anyone who doubts my independence?"

ere too abstract and too alien to the Deputies' habitual field of action.⁶ Even a gallant attempt to solve the problem of the Maritime Conventions did not meet with good fortune; and though the Minister of Finance (Salandra) was able to collect a favourable vote on a penetrating and honest analysis of the budget, it was clear that the Deputies were either indifferent to Sonnino's work or hostile to it. And Sonnino's somewhat proud conscience rebelled. He had no intention of remaining in a situation where he was merely tolerated. Although no real vote of confidence had been taken, and though his action was not accordingly strictly in accordance with constitutional procedure, he resigned⁷ and left the Camera to find someone else in accord with its wishes.

Since his resignation was almost obviously due to the attitude of Giolitti's followers, it looked as if Giolitti would turn. But he saw too many difficulties inherent in the political situation to wish to confront it, and preferred to urge the aims of another—Luigi Luzzatti. Luzzatti was a man of unusual talents, at once an excellent financier, a distinguished economist and a noted *littérateur*. He was moreover acceptable to nearly every section in the Camera and was considered to possess real technical competence for his work.⁸ It was a pity that Giolitti, having recommended so gifted a personality for the premiership, should not have been willing disinterestedly to observe the result. But this would have implied a renunciation of personal power, and he preferred to maintain contact with his followers and force Luzzatti into the curiously dependent position once occupied by Fortis. The ambiguity of the situation was in fact strikingly expressed a few months later, when one Deputy remarked bitterly that Luzzatti possessed indeed a majority, but a majority which "had been put at his disposal . . ." and a majority that "looked elsewhere for its inspiration," so that while Luzzatti held "the regent's sceptre," the "imperial purple" remained with another.⁹ Under such conditions it was difficult for the Government to function sincerely. The Camera remained conscious of the fact that outside the Cabinet there was a shadow-premier at once Luzzatti's predecessor, successor, and contemporary," and it waited uneasily to see what manœuvres this hidden force

might make. Though the Ministry composed by Luzzatti was a fairly strong one, containing representatives from every part of the Camera except the Socialists and Republican groups,¹⁰ its collective work was not up to the achievement of its individual members, and despite the capacity shown by, for instance, Spingardi (Minister for War) and Credaro (Minister for Education) it failed to achieve the two chief reforms at which Luzzatti aimed—the reform of the Senate and the reform of the franchise.¹¹

It made a good beginning, however, by settling the vexed question of the maritime convention and bringing forward an important measure for improvement in the system of elementary education. The matter of the convention was solved by a method already fairly familiar to the Deputies—a method which consisted in drafting a provisional agreement to cover the worst difficulties of the situation and postponing consideration of its final liquidation until such time as the Camera should be in a calmer mood to discuss it. Elementary education was really assisted by a Bill improving the organization of provincial schools and providing for greater financial aid on the part of the State.¹² Both were measures that reflected credit on the Government's regard for public interest and its ability to dissipate parliamentary opposition; but neither quality was enough to aid it in the reform of the Senate, where a medley of interests and loyalties combined to impede even the discussion of new ideas.

The impulse to reform in this field was no novelty. Dissatisfaction with the Senate's actual functioning in constitutional life had been felt as far back as the time of Cavour, and Cavour had considered the possibility of making it an elective body. Any attempt at change had, however, been impeded by the fact that reform of the Senate meant an amendment of the Constitution; and amendments to the Constitution were from a legal point of view a very thorny matter.¹³ So various governments had allowed the question to be postponed, until by this time its need of consideration was a very obvious one. The fact that there was no restriction on the number of senators, that they were nominated by the King and appointed for life, that in addition they could only be drawn

from certain categories in the nation, and then only from men over forty years of age—all made it seem an anachronism, at best an institution old-fashioned in spirit. An assembly formed in this way was, *a priori*, likely to be out of touch with national life, and in the last decade it seemed indeed to have withdrawn almost habitually from contact with actual events. Even during the brief sittings which were held adjournments were frequent, and the number of absentee members made discussion an abstract affair.¹⁴ The daily Press hardly troubled to report its activities, and while the Camera dei Deputati advanced along new paths, it seemed passively to have entered and remained in a cul-de-sac. "The Senate," as a distinguished theorist said, summing up the matter, "has become reduced to a great administrative body, spectator rather than actor in the public life of the country . . . and this contradicts both its origin and its history . . ."

Luzzatti approached the reform strategically, arranging that the stimulus towards it should come from the Senate itself.¹⁵ In May 1910 an eminent member rose to ask the Government its intentions regarding reform of the Upper House, at the same time moving that a Commission should be appointed to study and consider what reforms should be made in its composition and functioning.¹⁶ The motion was well received, and Luzzatti seemed to be encouraged to hope for real results, when subsequent discussion of the subject showed an irreconcilable divergency of views. Some did not want the reform because they considered it implied an attack on the privileges of the King; others thought that if reform were begun it would end by making the Upper House too democratic a body; others, again, thought that to make the Senate more effective was to weaken the power of the Camera.¹⁷ In the end, in fact, two main tendencies appeared: to leave things as they were for fear of making them worse; or to try to reform, but to do so with such conviction that no one could be quite sure where the reform would stop. The Ministry itself, perplexed by so many conflicting currents, showed itself doubtful of the right course to pursue; whence, since general warmth on the subject was lacking, it had in the end to be allowed to drop.

Nor did better success attend the reform of the franchise. It, too, was a reform which Parliament contemplated without real enthusiasm. Many Deputies knew that the two Radical members of the Cabinet (Sacchi and Credaro) had imposed it on the Government as the price of their taking office,¹⁸ and the Camera as a whole was inclined to regard the issue as a kind of Trojan horse by means of which the "popular" parties (and especially the Estrema) meant to enter Parliament in overwhelming force. It is true that what Luzzatti proposed was far from being a very "leftist" measure; he merely suggested giving the vote to those who could pass a literacy test, and he explicitly rejected the idea of universal suffrage as being unsuited to the facts of the situation.¹⁹ Accordingly, the projected increase in the size of the electorate could not have given the Socialists any very alarming predominance, and its general unpopularity was due less to the principle involved than (in many cases) to personal nervousness on the Deputies' part regarding the fate of their constituencies.²⁰ So clear was their distaste towards any alteration in the balance of votes that Luzzatti devised an ingenuous expedient to rectify it; he decided, that is to say, to bring a new mass of bourgeois electors to the polls by making voting compulsory and abstention punishable by fine. In view of the very large number of the enfranchised public who never troubled to exercise their right, this provision would obviously bring into play a reserve of moderate elements almost equal in influence to the new working-class elements emancipated by the literacy qualification.²¹ It was a compromise that might have been expected to satisfy all parties; instead it pleased none. The Conservatives and the Giolittians still complained of the power the extension would place in the hands of the industrial workers; the Estrema ridiculed the compromise as giving with one hand what it took back with the other. "The extension of the suffrage as conceived by Luzzatti," said one Deputy wittily, "may be described in musical phraseology as *allargata ma non troppo*," and he went on to point out that the Bill was calculated to meet the sentiments both of those who wanted no franchise reform at all and those who wanted it at almost any cost.

As the general hostility was so obvious, Luzzatti tried to

extricate himself from the situation by resorting to the classical device of temporarily shelving it. The Radicals, however, insisted that it should be dealt with in the near future,²² and while the different sections of the Camera seemed ready seriously to give battle on the issue, Giolitti suddenly made it a question of the Government's life or death. For, to the surprise of even his own followers, he suddenly rose (and without warning of the change in his opinions) declared that a partial extension of the franchise could only be unsatisfactory and must be replaced by universal suffrage.²³ The announcement was little short of a thunderbolt. Not even the Estrema had dreamt of so radical a reform; and apart from this, those of Giolitti's followers who were commonly regarded as his spokesmen had only recently expressed Conservative views. Ignoring this inconsistency, however, the old majority rallied to its chief, the two Radical Ministers in the Cabinet resigned, and Luzzatti, confronted by an unfavourable vote of 265 against 69, felt that he should follow suit. The vote itself (passed on a motion not directly concerning the Government's policy) did not formally strike the Cabinet, but its implication was certainly such that Luzzatti could not hope to continue with his work; and he preferred to fall at once rather than continue in an equivocal position.

Since it was clear that Giolitti was now ready to resume power, no one was surprised to see him accept the premiership. But even Deputies hardened to his methods received a shock when he solved the crisis by the simple expedient of confirming in office again nearly all the Ministers who had previously formed part of Luzzatti's Government. The only new elements were Finocchiaro-Aprile (Justice), Francesco Nitti (Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce), and T. Calissano (Post and Telegraphs); so that the very men who under Luzzatti had represented one set of ideas were now by a Giolittian sleight of hand to represent another.²⁴ An attempt to introduce a new and definitely Socialist note into the Cabinet was indeed made by inviting L. Bissolati to accept Ministerial rank, and, had it succeeded, the invitation would really have marked an important development in politics.²⁵ For Bissolati was a figure in Parliament—a man whose innate goodness and generosity

A similar note of warning was struck in a speech by F. Martini, who made a brilliantly witty analysis of the chief aspects of parliamentary decadence. Giolitti's policy in regard to political parties he defined as that of a pendulum oscillating rhythmically between Right and Left; and he added significantly: "the origin of what seems to me an 'overturning' of the parliamentary order is the following: it is no longer a question of principle; but of a man—an *expert distributor of constituencies*." Following on this he disposed of any pretence to coherency among the members of the Cabinet, pointing out not only the inconsistencies in the ideas of its individual members, but in the very fact of their collaboration, and adding that in the government of states it was necessary to maintain order not only "in the piazza" but in "the spirit."²⁸ After this it was not easy for Giolitti to deliver a convincing defence. Though his arguments reflected credit on his powers of casuistry, their validity crumbled at the touch of reality, and was not restored by promises of democratic reform. It was, for instance, hardly a happy inspiration for him to say that in his opinion the only unconstitutional governments were those which had not a majority in Parliament. Nor was it really very satisfying when he declared that "a programme which aims at raising morally, intellectually, and politically the great mass of the working class in Italy is the programme which best corresponds to the common desire to see our country tranquil, prosperous and great."²⁹

Still, he was (as usual) able to rely on the fidelity of his followers, and their approval presented him with the handsome majority of two hundred and fifty-two votes. He was moreover lucky in the circumstances which attended the debates on his two main items of government—the reform of the franchise and the Government monopoly of insurance. Both gave promise of provoking a threatening amount of opposition, and both having survived a first reading were retarded in their final stages by the outbreak of the Libyan War, at the conclusion of which no one was inclined to be very rigid or conservative in principle. It was the law on insurance that first required attention. It aimed at putting every form of life insurance in the hands of the National Insurance Institute ir

ome, and subjecting the Institute in turn to the control of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. It was, according to Nitti, an idea entirely original to Italy, and its aim was avowedly social. Not only was it intended to regulate the terms of insurance throughout the kingdom in as equitable a manner as possible, but by means of its surplus capital to assist the National Bureau for the care of the sick and aged among workpeople.³⁰ It involved, however, the liquidation of all private insurance companies and the repression of foreign insurance corporations, many of which enjoyed a flourishing business in Italy, and had profited by it to draw Italian capital abroad. Almost unanimously they protested; and the Government had to face organized protest within the kingdom as well as diplomatic pressure from abroad. Even such eminent economists and jurists as Pareto, Pantaleoni, and Einaudi dared to criticize a State monopoly, both on legal grounds and because experience had shown the ill-success which attended State management of commercial concerns. Nitti had hard work to get the Bill through its first stages, and its fate still seemed somewhat uncertain when the issue was postponed for later discussion. In March 1912, however, after the conclusion of the war, it was passed without much disagreement, perhaps because in the interim the Government had radically amended its chief features and provided for a gradual passage from private to State control. In this form the measure enjoyed a fair amount of practical success and remained as one of Giolitti's minor but useful achievements.

Objectively considered, the next issue on his horizon should have helped rather than hindered his Government. The fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy (March 1861) supplied a splendid opportunity for public celebrations and the awakening of general sentiment. And yet, though the occasion excited the greatest enthusiasm, and though the unveiling of the statue to Vittorio Emanuele as "father of his country" was greeted with a hurricane of applause, the celebrations were not held without a tinge of bitterness. Unity had undoubtedly aided the country materially, but had it really satisfied the nation spiritually or created in the people the consciousness of a common life? It was the old

problem returning with redoubled force to plague men's minds and contribute to their subjective unrest. Those thinkers who wished to be intellectually honest could not help reflecting that unity still seemed more an administrative fact than a sentiment operating among the masses . . . and their reflections were given point by dissensions between Rome, Turin, and Florence as to the share each should have in the commemorative events.³¹ For, characteristically, neither of the Northern cities could forget that it had once (however briefly) been capital of Italy; and if Rome was to have a special celebration, they felt that they ought to have special celebrations too. Florence, remembering its artistic prominence, declared firmly that it would hold a portrait exhibition; Turin made arrangements for an International Fair of Industry; and both furnished competition to the great general Exhibition of Art which was to be held in Rome. It is true that from the point of view of national energy such regional feeling had great advantages; but it was equally true that it had great drawbacks for the development of solidarity and national co-operation. Despite their pride in the advance which had been made, men began inevitably to contrast it with the advance they would have liked to see, and the many speeches which were made recalling the glory of the Risorgimento tended by reaction to focus their attention on the faults and evils of their everyday life. Indeed, it was inevitable that the parliamentary intrigues of the last years should have lowered the prestige of political institutions and deprived them of their natural claim to the nation's respect. The most optimistic observer of political life could not fail to see that if Giolitti observed the letter of the constitution, he felt no hesitation about breaking its spirit. The Constitution in fact seemed to exist chiefly for the purpose of providing the Prime Minister with exercise in political gymnastics, so that (like Canovas in Spain) he governed under, over, around and even through it, but never honestly or disinterestedly with it.³² It was a spectacle to which Italy in the several decades of her national existence should have become almost accustomed; and yet, momentarily inspired by the example of Zanardelli and Sonnino, men felt towards it a repulsion far more active and

finite than in the time of Depretis. Perhaps it was because they had now greater political experience and more knowledge of the necessities of internal as well as external politics; perhaps it was because the improvement in economic prosperity and material development had made them more acutely conscious of the deficiencies in their politicians' technique; perhaps it was simply that the problems of collective life, appearing in new ways in a more complex and vital form, made them more sharply critical of the organs supposed to regulate it. In any event the close of the first decade of the twentieth century marked a return to that state of spiritual unrest and intellectual questioning which had characterized the close of the 'eighties.³³ Disillusionment, political uneasiness, and a deeper tendency to disintegration—these were the most marked features of the day. They were, too, accompanied by a profound discouragement, a feeling that Italy's genius was not of the right kind for the new age, and that the vigour and intellectual power expressed by individuals could never be generalized and made characteristic of the nation. Caught again in the rhythm of pessimism, watching the sham and pretence of political routine, men tended to ignore the positive results which Italy had obtained in the world, and thought only in terms of her failures. It was useless to point to the remarkable achievements of individual Italians in the field of international letters and science; to recall that the names of Galvani and Volta and Marconi were famous in the field of electrical discovery, that Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile occupied a leading place in the development of philosophy and aesthetics; that D'Annunzio was soon to be hailed as one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. . . . These seemed isolated phenomena unconnected with the threads of ordinary circumstances from which the nation's fate was being woven. Utility and restriction were felt to be the chief elements in its pattern, and it was because men's awakened consciousness rebelled bitterly against them that the so-called "Nationalist movement" grew up and flourished.

Its point of departure was not (in reality) industrial excess craving expression in some form of economic and popular imperialism; nor (in the beginning) did it owe much

to inflated patriotic sentiment; it was at first quite simply a protest against poverty and a life that seemed to have lost standards and inspiration. In this way Corradini—the leading Nationalist writer—said in 1903 that it was his purpose to “raise a voice against the meanness of present existence,” while a few years later Maraviglia denounced those politicians who “thought to satisfy the niggardly interests of individuals and classes,” adding that Nationalism had arisen to “protest against this miserable state of things.”³⁴ The same idea appeared in the saying of the poet Pascoli when he wrote in 1910 that the time had come for “heroic work,” that “it was the hour for Italy to reconquer Italy.” Fundamentally all three were fighting the same thing, and their general point of view was admirably explained by Sighele in his preface to *Pagine Nationaliste*, when he spoke of “the necessity of raising Italian life from the quietism into which it had settled, and of putting before it better ideals than those which had hitherto bounded its activity.” “More than a work of patriotism,” he continued, “this is perhaps a work of moral education. (We regret) the sorry spectacle offered by certain elections which are fought not for the triumph of a principle but for the triumph of a person or of undiscussable interests. We regret, too, the weakening of the principle of authority and responsibility in all social orders. Disorganization seems to us to appear in the family, the profession, the schools. . . . Moralists raise the cry of alarm, and say that our education must be undertaken anew. We agree. But the fulcrum of every change, the basis of every renovation . . . can only consist in giving back (to those who have lost it) enthusiasm for an idea which is above the mean horizon of personal interests. If everything is disintegrating in the family, in the schools, in life . . . it is because no one thinks of anything but himself, and no one cares for an aim higher than that which coincides with his immediate interests. . . . When the hopes and ambitions of individuals rise above the purpose of somehow or other conquering for themselves a diploma or a position . . . when everyone feels not only a platonic affection but a conscious responsibility towards the nation, and places its greatness and glory in the forefront of his thoughts—moral renovation will

begin to be achieved."³⁵ They were lofty words, and they did not lack a romantic reflection in art and literature, where modernist writers popularized other aspects of the Nationalistic creed. The spirit of adventure, the conception of life as a thing poor in itself and without meaning unless devoted to the service of a mystical cause, the belief in the necessity of a "supreme experience" (such as war) in order to reawaken those "heroic ethics" which were thought to have disappeared in the bourgeois search for comfort and trade—these were ideas expressed in the motto "live dangerously," in the splendid imagery of D'Annunzio's verse, and in his ringing line in *La Nave*, "Arma la prora e salpa verso il mondo" (Man the prow and sail out into the world).³⁶

It was unfortunate that they did not represent the whole of the Nationalist philosophy. For beginning as a movement genuinely idealistic in tone, it degenerated with certain writers into an excuse for brutality and violence. Empty rhetoric took the place of enthusiasm, and a set of emotional catch phrases were used to justify the mobilization of prejudice and hate. From being a force of spiritual inspiration it became very often one of dogmatic bigotry, and from appealing to the ideals of civilized life ended by denying them to exalt materialism. The intellectual honesty which had once underlain its principles gave way in some phases to a contorted process of intellectual deception, and where men had once tried to sublimate the more primitive of their passions they finished by indulging them with all the comfort of ideological excuse. The names of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Kipling were mentioned in company with those of Nietzsche and Barrès and Maurras: liberalism and democracy were decried as symptoms of decadent weakness: pacificism was ridiculed and labelled cowardice: and in the end the crusade to raise humanity through nationality ended by setting humanity and nationality at opposite poles.

It would be mistaken to think this change in ideology took place suddenly, or that the Nationalists developed their doctrine within a short space of time. The movement began in 1903 with the foundation of the journal *Il Regno* and went through several different phases, marked by the abrupt end

of the *Il Regno* in 1905, the foundation of the *Voce* in the same year, and the formation of the Nationalist Association in 1911 with the printing of its organ *L'Idea Nazionale*.³⁷ The trend of opinion represented by *La Voce* was on the whole different from that of *Il Regno*, and showed Prezzolini and Papini turning away from the more aggressive elements of Nationalism to try and advocate internal reform.³⁸ They thought indeed that Italy should set her house in order before embarking on adventures abroad, and spoke much of combating illiteracy, suppressing malaria, and improving the condition of the peasantry. In contrast to this Corradini and Maraviglia and the other thinkers of their school were inclined to see the solution of internal difficulties in a complete readjustment of foreign policy, which they considered should be given an expansionist character, so as to satisfy Italy's need of an outlet for emigration. No reproach was felt so keenly by the Nationalists as that of the number of Italians who annually left their country to "become tillers of other people's soil." It was his personal observation of the phenomenon of emigration that influenced Corradini to emphasize the need of colonies and to enunciate his theory of a "struggle between nations." "Our point of departure (he said) should be this: there are proletarian nations as there are proletarian classes; nations, that is to say, whose living conditions are disadvantageously lower than those of other nations. . . . As Socialism teaches the proletariat the value of the class struggle, so we must teach Italy the value of the international struggle. . . . But if the international struggle means war—well then, let there be war!"³⁹ It was a conclusion which most of the Nationalists found implicit in their premises, and Corradini himself spoke repeatedly of the "moral value" of conflict. War, he declared on another occasion, would awaken national consciousness and inspire at last a spirit of national co-operation. And in this view he was followed even by Papini (famous in another field as the author of the *Life of Christ*), who considered war as "the great anvil of fire and blood on which strong peoples are hammered," and wrote of it in the following terms: "When lives must be sacrificed, we do not feel saddened so long as there shines before our mind the

great harvest of superior life which shall rise from those deaths. And while the small democrats cry out against war as a barbarous return of extinct cruelty, we conceive it as a great reawakening of the enfeebled—as a rapid and heroic means to power and wealth.”⁴⁰

From this emphasis on war there followed almost inevitably a strong tendency to emphasize the supremacy of the State and the insignificance of the individual in comparison to it. The individual according to this view was simply a cell in the great organism of the nation, and the nation itself represented an unbreakable union of forces. All citizens . . . must be subordinated to it and to the necessities of its life, its struggles and power.⁴¹ Certainly these ideas did not obtain general favour, but after the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina they seemed an antidote to Italy's feeling of diplomatic humiliation. The Irredentists moreover found them useful material for keeping alive the flame of public indignation over Austrian policy in Trento and Trieste, while many young Socialists (weary of the decline in their party's vigour) were inclined to find new inspiration in its teachings. The first Nationalist Congress held at Florence in December 1910, with the object of urging military preparation and a forward policy in the acquisition of colonies, had unexpected success: and the drift of events towards the Libyan War suddenly supplied Nationalist leaders with a magnificent opportunity for conducting propaganda. Though their influence declined after the conflict, their share in pushing the Government into an active policy was undoubted, and made an impression on public opinion destined to be deepened by the Great War, and to play an important part in later Italian history.

The Libyan War emerged almost inevitably from the tangle of Italian interests in Tripolitania, coupled with an unexpected development of German activity in the Mediterranean. From about the end of the nineteenth century Italy had been carrying on a process of "peaceful penetration" in the territory. Schools and post offices had been established, steamship communications encouraged, and the financial influence of the Banca di Roma extended by the organization of various agencies and branches.⁴² It was a process that had

at first been much hindered by the opposition of the Turkish Government, anxious to guard the last African possession left it by the European Powers. But after the rise of the Young Turk movement there had been a temporary phase of Turkish goodwill, which had encouraged Italian entrepreneurs to hope for some permanent Italo-Turkish understanding. In 1910 the return of Turkish hostility was accordingly felt as a double blow. Had the Porte confined itself to passively obstructing Italian commerce, perhaps official Italy would not have been roused from its customary apathy; but while the Italians felt themselves intangibly hindered at every turn, they saw that German influence was being encouraged to expand over the very ground they were losing. And the Banca di Roma, finding its interests severely injured, was constrained to consider selling them to an Austro-German bank.⁴³ This was not a fact that any government could view without disquiet, and the potential blow it meant to Italy's prestige in the Mediterranean was the more serious because something like a common European understanding existed that, if Tripoli were to be annexed by any European Power, Italy had first claim.

This understanding dated back to the time of the competition with France for the possession of Tunis. At that date the French Government had clearly allowed Italy to understand that it would regard an Italian occupation of the Libyan zone as a species of *quid pro quo* for the establishment of French influence in the Regency; but Depretis, with his usual neglect of foreign affairs, had failed to take any advantage of the opportunity.⁴⁴ Subsequently, however, in 1887 de Robilant, in negotiating with Berlin and Vienna for the renewal of the Triple Alliance, had obtained a promise from Germany to assist Italy in the event of France developing ambitions toward Tripolitania⁴⁵ . . . and a similar understanding had almost contemporaneously been arrived at with England. Only three years later, moreover, Crispien had extracted a definite recognition of Italy's claims to Tripolitania from the English, Austrian and German Governments.⁴⁶ And later, when Visconti-Venosi and Prinetti were working for the establishment of an entente with France, Delcassé and Barrère had implicitly given Italy a free hand in that territory in return for a free hand for

France in Morocco.⁴⁷ Finally, in 1909 even Russia had been drawn within the circle of diplomatic agreements, promising a "benevolent attitude" towards the development of Italian interests—with the result that in 1911 Italy held something very like a right of option over Libya, backed by the best diplomatic precedents. Unfortunately, however, it was precisely at this moment that the incident of Agadir had occurred, and Germany, forced to abandon her ambitions in Morocco by joint Franco-British opposition, began to look elsewhere in the Mediterranean.⁴⁸ Not without reason, well-informed Italian circles began to wonder if the right to a free hand in Tripolitania were really of indefinite validity; and pushed on by fear of a repetition of the Tunis experience; pushed on by fear of losing this last chance of expansion in the Mediterranean and of having another great military and naval Power opposite Southern Italy, the Government began to consider making good its claims. Simultaneously fresh opposition to the activities of the Italians on the part of the Young Turks, together with the spread of neglect and disorder in Tripolitania itself, provided at least some ground for a decisive gesture,⁴⁹ and having received an assurance of neutrality from the Great Powers an ultimatum was presented to Turkey on 28th September requiring her consent to the military occupation of Tripoli by Italy; and this was followed next day by a declaration of war.

So far as the human element in the military operations was concerned the country had reason to feel proud. Troops and officers proved excellent, and there were many episodes whose heroic quality seemed suddenly to re-establish and ennoble the meaning of national existence. Only the Government and the High Command were unequal to the test of events. The High Command because it was entrusted to Caneva, a kindly, upright man entirely lacking in initiative; the Government because Giolitti was reluctant to undertake the war in the first place, and once it had begun, was apt to treat it as an unwelcome diversion from such home affairs as the reform of the franchise.⁵⁰ Though the campaign on sea began brilliantly with the destruction of a Turkish flotilla by the Duca degli Abruzzi (the King's cousin), the campaign on land, after some brilliant

initial successes, found the Italians closed in the little cities of the coast, while Turkey was being given time to strengthen her means of resistance. In this way events dragged on for over a year, and in the course of it grave deficiencies were found to exist in the army's equipment. Though the inquiry into the condition of the army ordered by Parliament in 1909 had done something to repair previous neglect, some grave defects had remained, and perhaps even Giolitti was deceived as to the difficulties which existed both at home and in the field of action.⁵¹ Certainly the declaration of war had been made over-hastily and without adequate preparation. News of the vital decision had not been properly circulated amidst the ministers until the last moment, and Nitti, when questioned as to the possibility of active intervention, had replied by quoting an old cartoon: ". . . Tripoli—Trappola" (*trappola* meaning a "trap" or "snare").⁵² The Minister for Foreign Affairs had moreover mismanaged the diplomatic aspect of the war, so that the very Powers who were secretly pledged to countenance Italian annexation were loudest in their moral and ethical rebukes. Censures on the enterprise were passed by a large section of the international Press (happily ignorant of its real diplomatic development) and a policy of veiled hostility by various Governments rendered difficult the rapid success which Italy's superiority at sea might have achieved.⁵³ Turkey was, as Giolitti wrote, "armed by her foreign debts"; and apart from this, the tangle of economic and diplomatic pretensions involved in the Libyan issue was such that in conducting operations Italy was (as he said) "forced to dance upon eggs."⁵⁴ Germany, feeling that her Mediterranean interests had been thwarted, spoke openly of her sympathy with Turkey, and, ignoring the Triple Alliance, ignored also any goodwill which it might have implied towards Italy. Austria made it clear that she would not tolerate any attempt to create a diversion and weaken Turkey in the Balkans; France was involved in two minor episodes from which it appeared that she was more than benevolently disposed to the Arabs. Of all the nations with Mediterranean interests only Russia showed herself friendly—and this was more in the hope of seeing Turkey injured than from positive feeling towards Italy.

Partly owing to these difficulties, and partly owing to difficulties in Libya itself, peace was not concluded till October 1912. Its terms were not regarded as being a compensation for the burden of the war. Italy's sovereignty over Libya was, it is true, recognized, the Sultan retaining only his spiritual authority over the last vilayet; but Italy had to agree to the restitution of the Turkish islands which she had occupied in the Aegean and allow a certain time limit for Turkish troops and officers to leave the new Italian territory. Actually some of these officers remained to incite and organize revolts among the Arabs, and as Turkey failed to fulfil the conditions of restitution Italy retained the islands of the Aegean.⁵⁵ It was a saving development that being unforeseen at this moment did nothing to assuage popular disillusionment over what was called a "melancholy epilogue" to a victorious war or a "non-victorious peace."⁵⁶ That a non-victorious peace might after all be something rather fine and remarkable had not yet entered men's consciousness. The public in general felt bitterness over the outcome of the enterprise, and the Government, having negotiated the treaty more by force of circumstance than principle, had not the necessary conviction to defend it. The result was that after an initial pause (a pause almost of expectation) people lost the public interest which had previously roused them from preoccupation with private concerns; and the war, which might really have been an instrument towards national change, passed rapidly into the limbo of forgotten experience.

And yet it had at first been very popular. Even so balanced and prudent a political figure as Salandra had considered it as a great expression of national will—perhaps the first affirmation of the united Italian people within the sphere of world affairs.⁵⁷ It was not only (as the Nationalists had hoped) that it woke national consciousness and made men ready to think in collective terms. It gave them a new sense of the meaning and value of the country.⁵⁸ From being something too often evaluated in terms of taxes and civil duties, from being something taken for granted as a background to private enterprise, it became suddenly an entity to be fought for and defended: a *patria* in the ancient and most honourable sense of the word.

Perhaps the ideal values of the war itself were not closely investigated; and it was as well that they were not, since as Turati said, "the colonial history of all nations is, more or less, one of brigandage" and the war for the acquisition of Tripolitania was certainly no better in this regard than the other African wars waged by European Powers. So far as men tried to justify it, they did so in terms of the principle of emigration, the principle of *tu quoque* applied to other nations, and the view that Italy was a modern Western State and was likely to bring more civilization to the territory than the crumbling Ottoman Empire.⁵⁹ In sober truth it was not the material advantages offered by Libya that made the public desire its annexation. They were far more influenced by emotional and sentimental considerations than by any craving for economic gain.⁶⁰ They could not, quite simply, resign themselves to the loss of African prestige entailed by Crispi's adventure in Abyssinia; they could not, even more simply, resign themselves to the idea of the French, the English, and the Spanish all establishing themselves along the African coast, while Italy's claims were politely withdrawn and the German flag waved over territory formerly occupied by Italian interests. They could not, finally, resign themselves to the fact that Italian colonists could not seek their fortune on the shores of the Mediterranean—*Mare Nostrum*—but should be compelled to settle on the shores of the Red Sea amidst the heat and sands of Eritrea.⁶¹ These were the feelings really underlying the enterprise, and in terms of them the fearless criticism discharged by the Socialists—their comments on "imperialist exploitation" and "the capitalist search for new markets"—was so much criticism wasted.⁶² Subjectively, the enterprise was rather an example of confused loyalty to Italy than an instance of territorial greed or political ambition. Besides, as the war progressed any need of justifying annexation gradually faded from people's minds, and the sacrifice and heroism which the conflict called forth gradually gilded its principle. Giolitti showed on this occasion a real intuition of the truth when, rising in Parliament to congratulate the military and naval forces on their achievements, he added that a share in the praise belonged to the nation, which "without

distinction of class or social status has rallied with one mind round its army and navy, and has quietly sent its sons to die for their country."

This being the spirit of the time, it was little short of a tragedy that there should have been no Italian statesman great enough to interpret it and canalize its force in the direction of ordinary public affairs. Something like Sorel's "heroic ethic" seemed to hover in the air; antagonistic tendencies still seemed ready for cohesion; and men would clearly have responded to the reorganization of old ways with all the enthusiasm of their excited feelings. But the moment was allowed to pass. It had come at an hour when the political leaders were not equal to the burden of leadership, and even the best men in Parliament lacked the training to bring about a reorientation in political events. Above all, there was lacking a great personality to inspire and keep alive in ordinary circumstances the faith which had grown up in response to the demands of crisis; and lacking outside support it began to dwindle, leaving behind (by reaction) a gap worse than had existed before. Italy, who had begun to have the feeling of having found herself, returned to the view that the feeling was only an illusion; and the vote-catching machinery of politics proceeded to grind down enthusiasm, generosity, and disinterest with the same indifferent efficiency as it had formerly absorbed and used scepticism, factionism, and self-seeking.

In fact the main events after the conclusion of the peace seemed as if designed to emphasize precisely the more disappointing and sordid aspects of politics. Although Libya was now Italian, it was necessary to maintain there a large army of occupation and to continue an intermittent desert warfare in order to pacify the hinterland. At home, moreover, in the first half of 1912 there occurred a public scandal over the construction of the Hall of Justice in Rome. Rumours of corruption and jobbery in government were again current, and a Commission of Inquiry was ordered to sift the matter officially.⁶³ While its investigations were still contributing to public disillusionment there appeared on the horizon the much-discussed (and mistrusted) Bill for the extension of the franchise which, already laid before the Camera in June 1911,

had been retarded by the war and was now in May 1912 to receive its final revision. Its spirit was declared to be that once expressed by Zanardelli when he had remarked that in Italy "social and political life" had developed in many forms, and "only the electoral law remained immobile . . ." a fact which "amongst all civilized countries makes Italy the one where the distance between the real country and the legal country is greatest."⁶⁴ Actually, under the peculiar circumstances of Italian life an extension of the franchise in 1912 was no more likely to remove the separatism between Government and people than it had been in 1882. Under the new measure the right to vote was granted not only to those who already had it in virtue of the educational qualifications specified in the previous law, but to all who had completed their military service or had reached the age of thirty.⁶⁵ It meant an increase in the size of the electorate from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 millions, and a large proportion of the new voters owed their eligibility solely to their age qualification. Considering that all recent elections had shown how far Government pressure could be brought to bear on even the literate and well-to-do section of the population, the inclusion of so many illiterates suggested the wholesale purchase of sealing-wax by a sealmaker intent on trying his instruments. And indeed the issue was not whether the new electors were or were not capable of judging the issues submitted to them, but—as in 1882—whether their entrance into the political system was likely to regenerate its faults, or merely serve to generalize and protect corruption. "Will these new illiterate voters really purify political life?" asked one Deputy, formulating the doubt which was in everyone's mind. And other Deputies considered that, so far from widening the horizon of national life, they would tend to limit it still more, since they would interpret everything in terms of the small local interests with which they were familiar.⁶⁶ Such pessimistic voices were, however, in the minority in the Camera. Oblivious of its former diffidence towards Luzzatti's far more restricted measure, it exhibited a "lyrical enthusiasm" for Giolitti's Bill,⁶⁷ which was passed by 284 votes to 62. It was a change of attitude due to many causes—chiefly perhaps to the fact that the majority were afraid of being called

reactionary if they dissented. Apart from this, there were many who gave their votes less to the Bill than to Giolitti and his Government, while yet others were genuinely influenced by an emotional argument much in vogue after the war: "How can we refuse the vote to those who, like our soldiers in Libya, have deserved well of their country?"⁶⁸ Whether it was quite repaying these soldiers to draw them within a cycle of illicit influences was an open question, but those who favoured this argument were mainly idealists who hoped in a renovation of political life by some general outside force. They voted the law from this point of view, and were sincerely disappointed when it failed to operate in the way they had hoped.

For the general elections (which were held in October–November 1913) could hardly have given clearer proof of the Government's cynicism regarding the new franchise and its supposedly liberal principle. In the first place the programme submitted by Giolitti was characterized by a singular absence of frankness; and in the second place this initial tendency to ambiguity was turned into outright deception by the conclusion of an electoral pact between Giolitti and Count Gentiloni, leader of the new "Catholic Party." The idea of such a pact was not in itself reactionary. Ever since the Pope had relaxed the *non expedit* decree in 1905 the Catholics had been strengthening their organization, and now represented an important body of public opinion as well as an influential force in the direction of mass feeling. To have won their collaboration in the Government might under certain circumstances have been a statesmanlike act. It was not so in this instance because its background represented chiefly an attempt at securing votes, regardless of the demands of political principle or the need of coherency of ideas in the Government majority. By its terms the Catholic organization agreed to support all Government candidates who undertook not to vote certain measures repugnant to the Church, while the Government promised its support to the candidates put forward by the Catholic organization.⁶⁹ News of this *quid pro quo* was to be kept secret; and in constituencies outside its provisions Giolitti had no hesitation in giving his protection

to Radicals, Freemasons, and Socialists. The Premier was, in short, deceiving the electorate in order to juggle with two opposing tendencies in political life (Radical-Conservative), and when the news became public after the elections it created little short of an explosion of indignation.

It was made public by Count Gentiloni himself, who had clearly a certain interest in revealing the powers which his organization possessed. Granting an interview to the *Giornale d'Italia*, he declared that he had "tried to put into practice the directions of the Holy See," and added details of the extent to which Catholic influence had been used to determine electoral results.⁷⁰ From these details it appeared that he could boast of having assured their seats to some two hundred Deputies of the majority. In other words, over two hundred of the Government's supporters owed their election to essentially Conservative forces—forces with which Giolitti's Radicals (and Radical anti-clerical!) and Democratic supporters now suddenly found themselves forced into coalition. And if this were not enough to suggest to the public that the right to vote had been granted only in order that its legitimate use might be circumvented, there was the general fact that the elections had rarely in Italian history been more shamelessly "manipulated." Prefects, sub-prefects, and officials of every kind had been turned into electoral agents, communal councils had been dissolved, electors coerced or bought—in short, the whole machinery of governmental influence had been used to secure the election of Government candidates.⁷¹

So obvious were the facts and so cynical the attitude they represented that they were made the subject of pointed comment in Parliament even among the Deputies who were accustomed to Giolitti's political system. It was Comandini who declared that the Gentiloni Pact represented an act of disloyalty to the public, and the words of Altobelli were even more direct: "The candidates (he said) who knew . . . (their seats) . . . could not be guaranteed as formerly by the Government alone . . . have . . . the Government acting as proxy—concluded this shameful pact with the Vatican, and from this . . . alliance between bad faith and the sacristy there has issued forth the ministerial majority, which should—

absurdly—provide for the material and moral interests of . . . Italy. To me that pact . . . is . . . stamped . . . with moral indignity, because . . . one thing was said to the electorate in order to do something else behind its back. . . . (The Government) being ashamed to appear 'clerical' in public, but renouncing its Liberalism behind the scenes."⁷² This was an analysis which, in its irrefutable truth, might have been expected to shake Giolitti's position in the Camera. But in reality that position was now something far stronger than parliamentary laws and precedents. A queer compound of force and fiction, of secret resistance and open compliance, it was at once intangible and unassailable. Those who rebelled against it found themselves rebelling against something too fine and pervasive to be broken by open opposition. They could not attack their enemy because it seemed to be everywhere and nowhere: in the electoral system, in the Cabinet, in Parliament, in the Deputies themselves. Perhaps Raimondo gave the best analysis of the essential incoherency in the position when he said that "the parties which fight one another in the country . . . appear to embrace one another in the Camera. To what do we owe this miracle? We owe it, like all other miracles, to the policy of the honourable Giolitti. The truth is that . . . under the shadow of a democratic flag we have insensibly arrived at a dictatorial régime (*un régime di dittatura*). The honourable Giolitti has four times 'made' the elections; in 1892, in 1904, in 1909, and 1913. Besides this, in his long parliamentary career Giolitti has nominated nearly all the senators, nearly all the councillors of State, all the prefects, and all the other high officials which exist in the administrative, judicial, political, and military hierarchy of our country. With this formidable power, he has carried out a work of grouping together parties by means of reforms . . . and a work of grouping together individuals by means of personal attentions. . . . Now . . . when the parties forget their programmes . . . when, arriving at the threshold of the Camera, they leave at the doors the rags of their political convictions . . . it is necessary for the majority to support itself by other means . . . as all personal powers support themselves, with tricks and corruption. . . . Thus in practice

one arrives at the annulment of parliamentary institutions and the annihilation of political parties."⁷³

Notwithstanding these criticisms, however, the Camera by 362 votes against 90 (with 13 abstentions) approved an order of the day expressing confidence in the Government. Giolitti appeared to have entered serenely on a new lease of power, when suddenly, unexpectedly, the Radicals showed that they meant to secede from the ministerial majority. Sensitive to the inconsistency of their position and weary of Giolitti's skilful evasions, they wanted to resume freedom of action and the combative life of opposition. Giolitti could actually have carried on without them. He had a strong numerical predominance, but he did not wish to face the governmental difficulties which had developed in the last few months. Indeed, the political situation was anything but a happy one. The railway workers were again threatening a strike; the Catholics were agitating against a Bill to make a civil ceremony precede the religious ceremony of marriage; the Socialists were preparing a bitter attack on the expenses involved in the Libyan campaign; finally, the Minister of Finance was already insisting on the necessity of new taxes to fill the deficit left in the Budget. . . . Whoever meant to deal with these issues firmly and unequivocally would inevitably be unpopular. And gratuitous unpopularity in the service of reform had never attracted Giolitti. He made the secession of the Radicals therefore into a convenient excuse for escaping from the onus of his position, and on 10th March, 1914, in view (as he said) of "the parliamentary situation," he presented his resignation to the King.⁷⁴ It was, as in 1909, a flight meant to make possible an ultimate return.⁷⁵ But for once the Premier had miscalculated his moves. Many years were to elapse before he was to return to power, and in the interim the instruments of his ascendancy were to be considerably blunted.

Considered as a whole, his three years of power showed only a bitter antinomy between profession and practice. To form his Ministry he had in the beginning turned to the Socialists and Bissolati, and in the end he had sought the Gentiloni alliance. He had insisted on universal suffrage so that the free will of the nation might find expression, and in

the first trial of universal suffrage he had deliberately vitiated its purpose. He had yielded to the idea of a colonial war for the conquest of Libya, and had accepted a peace that was colonially unsatisfactory. Finally he had on numerous occasions invoked democratic principles, and on numerous occasions had assisted so skilfully at their evasion that the cause of democracy, like the cause of universal suffrage, had lost both meaning and orientation. Lastly, in foreign affairs he had failed to leave the country in an assured position. For when the question of the renewal of the Triple Alliance had arisen⁷⁶ his Cabinet had not succeeded in obtaining any improvement of its terms. Relations with Austria indeed were more strained than at any time in recent Italian history. Conrad, chief of the Austrian staff, had recently advised his Government to wage a "preventive war" against Italy while she was engaged in the difficulties of the Libyan enterprise⁷⁷ (thereby repeating advice which he had tended earlier when the earthquakes of Reggio and Messina had placed Italy at a natural disadvantage): and though his scheme had been rejected by Franz-Joseph, the ascendancy of Berchtold in Austrian politics meant an anti-Italian tendency in the Austrian Government. Dispassionately considered, the renewal of the Triple Alliance could only put Italy in a false position, and if her nervousness concerning the French reaction to Tripoli partly explained Giolitti's wish for it,⁷⁸ the fact remained that it would have been better not to make Italy again the ally of a Power whose settled policy was one of almost open hostility to everything Italian. But just as he had been oblivious of the country's real interests at home, so he was oblivious of them abroad, ignoring the signs of the gathering European storm and the problem of the active rôle which Italy might shortly be called upon to play.

THE PROBLEM OF INTERVENTION, OF THE WAR, AND OF THE PEACE

SINCE the crisis which had determined Giolitti's resignation had been due (nominally at least) to the Radicals, it was the Radicals who might have been expected to be consulted about the choice of the next Premier. Instead Giolitti turned (as before) to the Right, and hopefully recommended Sonnino. Sonnino, however, was not to be caught three times. He refused office; and since the other most distinguished personality with Right tendencies was Antonio Salandra, it was Salandra that Giolitti next suggested to the King.¹ It was a better choice than perhaps he realized. Salandra was a man of character—resolute, steadfast, and disinterested. Possessing an unusually wide culture in law and philosophy, he united with it a marked capacity for action and a useful reserve of good sense. His sincerity and integrity were moreover beyond question, and a government formed under his supervision was likely to enjoy the advantage of seeming the one trustworthy Ministry in the midst of ministries which nobody could trust. Lastly, his political faith was of a Moderate Liberal colour, and though he had little sympathy with the Radical elements he was far from being merely an unenterprising Conservative or a reactionary in his ideas. It was his conviction that the Liberal Party had a special mission in Italy, and given a fair tenure of power that it might yet save the country from the disintegration which appeared to be destroying it. A few months before taking office he had in fact clearly expressed his views on this point. "The work of the Liberal Party," he had written, "is not yet exhausted. The multiform groups which now compose the *Estrema*, and which are called 'popular' to give them a common name, have as yet no concrete content, nor, up to now, do they dispose of such strength and political education as securely to develop their action in the field of what is real and possible. Those (Catholic

groups) who do not dare to call themselves 'Catholic,' have not shown in what way they mean to conquer . . . historical antinomies between the Roman Curia and the Italian State. There remain, therefore, only the Liberals—Liberals who are at one and the same time Conservatives and Progressives . . . for half a century they have guided the destinies of the State, and they must continue to endure until their work has been accomplished."² Apropos, moreover, of the Giolittian system of preserving power, he made a remarkable prophecy in 1909. "A majority which devotes all its activity to maintaining itself perpetually in power . . . and which imposes this egoistical aim on its Government . . . as a supreme task . . . may (by means of electoral tricks) maintain itself in power for some years, but its detachment from the country is fatal."

The Cabinet which he proceeded to compose was a competent one, including San Giuliano (who was retained at the direction of foreign affairs), Ferdinando Martini (one of the most distinguished of Left Deputies), the Senator Cavasola, and Rubini (Minister for the Treasury). The latter, an old Right Deputy esteemed and respected by all parties, was particularly skilled in financial matters and should have represented a gain to the Government. Actually, however, circumstances combined to bring out rather his defects than his strength. Hesitant by nature and so painfully scrupulous as to be incapable of quick decision, he was obdurate in refusing concessions which might fundamentally affect the Budget, and his thriftiness created difficulties over the choice of a Minister for War. Salandra would from the beginning have preferred General Porro, whose talents and technical capacity were well known; but Porro demanded an extraordinary credit of 800 millions in order to provide for the "most serious needs of the army," and Rubini, scandalized beyond measure, refused it.³ Salandra had therefore to turn to General Grandi, who professed himself satisfied with 200 millions, and in doing so implicitly revealed that he was Porro's inferior in knowledge and vision, if not perhaps in sincerity. For if the difference of 600 millions did not seem of great moment in March 1914, Serajevo was to show not only that the condition of the

army was of a supreme national interest, but that it was such as to require all the sacrifices of which the nation was capable.

In these early days there was, however, no intuition in Italy of impending disaster. Salandra, in outlining his programme of government, made special reference to the question of integrating and improving military organization chiefly because of the lacunae which the Libyan War had revealed in it. He wanted in addition to increase the general efficiency of national defence, but to do so in a manner calculated to repair the unwarranted neglect of the past, not to provide for any dangers which he detected in the near future. He alluded with equal care to the financial situation, explaining with concern that the year 1913-14 would close with a deficit of 23 millions, due to the cost of the colonial campaign, and that the estimates for the year 1914-15 were even more discouraging. To maintain the balance of the Budget it would be necessary to preserve all the measures passed by the preceding Government, and perhaps even devise new ones to meet increasing needs. Lastly, with regard to internal and foreign affairs he declared that he meant to follow a policy which should be based on patriotism and on liberty for all, adding that while the Government would itself scrupulously respect the law, it would require the same respect from others, since the maintenance of "public peace" was the best guarantee of liberty.⁴

With this programme he received the support of nearly all groups except the Extreme Left, gaining a favourable majority of 303 against 122. It was, however, still the old "Giolittian majority," and there were many who thought its present complaisance simply a temporary affair. Salandra, they considered, would be allowed to hold power until he had dealt with the most difficult questions of the day, but he would then be as neatly eliminated as Luzzatti or Sonnino. In this they underestimated their man, and at least one Deputy perceived as much. "Statistics," he said, "teach us that infantile mortality prevails among the ministries not presided over by the honourable Giolitti. Usually they do not even live to the measles stage, but pass away at the first teething crisis. With the honourable Salandra, however, everyone is agreed in

admitting that if he manages to cut his teeth it will not be easy to extract them.”⁵

Indeed, Salandra gave proof of his mettle in settling at once and with determination a difficulty which had arisen over the railways.⁶ For the railwaymen, influenced by the epidemic of strikes which had broken out in the latter part of Giolitti's Ministry, were once more threatening a suspension of public service. Admitting fairly and promptly such of the employees' grievances as were just, Salandra promised to revise the terms of their pensions, to improve their hours of work, and to increase the lowest grade of wages.⁷ With this, however, he showed that he meant to stand his ground, and that further agitation would only be injurious to those who participated in it. It was an attitude that carried conviction, and it induced the railwaymen's leaders to abandon the strike and accept with good grace what was offered them. This, however, was far from being the end of Salandra's difficulties with threatened disorders. On the 7th June scenes of violence occurred in Ancona during some demonstrations by Anarchists and Republicans, and shortly after a general strike was proclaimed throughout Italy. It was the signal for revolutionary disturbances in the cities of Romagna and the Marches, where in the smaller towns local "republics" were set up, while Ravenna was invaded by peasants from the surrounding country and Bologna dominated by crowds who gained possession of the Town Hall and hoisted the red flag.⁸ Elsewhere soldiers were besieged in their barracks, and certain officers (including a general) disarmed and made hostages. It is true that such episodes lacked the strength of an organized movement, that they were wanting in concrete aim and purpose, and that their leaders were often as naively minded as the provincial government of Fabriano, which solemnly decreed that chickens should be sold at not more than a lire a piece.⁹ Notwithstanding these facts, however, there could be no doubt of the alarm the situation inspired, or the general nervousness felt by the public—the public which had no means of knowing that "Red Week" would be only a "week" and not an indefinite period.

Actually it was brought to a close by two main factors—the

lack of cohesion among the insurrectionists themselves, and the tactful firmness of Salandra. For without provoking further tumults by violent measures of repression he showed an unyielding front, and when the railwaymen threatened a general railway strike if the leaders of the insurrection were punished, he called out two classes of reserves and prevented the strike from taking place.¹⁰ He did not hesitate, moreover, personally to exhort the provincial prefects to use their authority in the re-establishment of law and order, reminding them with dignity that they were the servants of the State and that they must continue at their posts, however difficult and dangerous the situation might seem.

It cannot be said that his task in this regard was an easy one. Long training in Giolitti's *laissez-faire* policy towards disorders had sapped both the energy and the will of administrative officials. At a moment when it was necessary to exhibit strong solidarity and a sense of co-operation they showed themselves more ready to compromise than to assert themselves, inclined by habit and tradition to purchase peace at the price of small concessions.¹¹ It was in a sense the just Nemesis of those Ministries who had in the past failed to support their functionaries in the provinces, teaching them rather to serve the interests of Deputies than to carry out the duties of administration; yet it represented something like a malignant weakness in the country's constitution—a weakness, moreover, likely to have the gravest effects in time of war, when the need of co-ordination between central and local organs would be very great. Indeed, one of the major problems of the next years was already taking form. In a country where the prestige of civil authority had been allowed to decline, and where agitators thought intimidation an infallible means of achieving their aims, how was the Government to make its official decisions respected? Had not Salandra himself to admit that the audacity of the subversive elements was more often than not due to a conviction of the Government's weakness rather than to the strength of their organization? A whole history of social disintegration lay behind the admission.¹² It was not that real tendencies to disorder and rebellion existed in the great mass of the people, but that, neglected and left to go

their own way, they had arrived at a state of mind where they felt action was the only effective protest, where, lacking leadership and consideration from above, they were prepared to accept leadership of any kind, however blind and confused. "In the disturbances caused by the scarcity of food, the mob goes in search of bread, and the means it employs is generally to wreck the bakeries." In many of the provinces the crowds did not even know what they were in search of—unless it were, perhaps dimly and unconsciously, good government, official consideration, and a balanced and reasonably happy social life.¹³ For many years such things had been forgotten by the politicians. Absorbed in the internal life of Parliament, they had ceased to think of their work in terms of flesh and blood, and had come to regard the values of politics as abstract values, complete in themselves, without reference to their human environment. It was only natural that in the end the environment should protest . . . that it should snatch at some sort of organization to achieve collective self-expression, even though it did not know how much self-expression would help. A great statesman or even a great popular leader would have understood this, and would have aimed not merely at putting down the insurrection but at removing its miserable causes. But even Giolitti, with his benevolent sentiment towards working-class agitation, had hardly gone beyond the formulation of a *laissez-faire* attitude; and Salandra, possessed as he was of an understanding and humane mind, had barely time to confront the crisis before being submerged in the problem of intervention in the Great War.

For by the irony of fate it was precisely at this moment, when the country had most need of repose and rest to put its house in order, that it was plunged into the world conflict and subjected to the strain and tension of three years' severe resistance. In such an atmosphere it was impossible to resolve pre-existing disharmonies; the most one could do was to repress them, thereby increasing their force and the internal suffering of those in whom they existed. Fighting on a variety of spiritual fronts at home, the Italian people were also to fight on the Austrian-Hungarian front; and in conflict with themselves and their environment were to take part in a

conflict against the Central European Powers. Such was in reality the state of affairs at the outbreak of hostilities, and it was not surprising that they imposed on people and country an almost unendurable ordeal.

While these events had been taking place, however, Salandra's Government had been compelled to turn its attention to foreign affairs, where the perennial friction between Italy and Austria had again shown signs of breaking out. Even before Salandra's rise to power in the latter part of 1913 Prince Hohenlohe (Austrian Governor of Trieste) had initiated a policy of suppressing Italian interests at the expense of Slav, and in August of that year had issued a decree requiring the Commune of Trieste to dismiss all its Italian employees not possessing Austrian citizenship.¹⁴ This had naturally neither created feeling in favour of the Triple Alliance nor helped to soothe the old resentment regarding the Irredentist provinces. In point of fact, in November of the same year certain Italian students of Graz had proceeded to demonstrate in favour of the establishment of an Italian university at Trieste, and their agitation having in turn provoked an aggressive attack by Austrian students (equally determined to assert their nationality) a violent conflict had ensued. Following this, questions had been asked in the Camera in Rome, and while the Minister for Foreign Affairs had striven to minimize the popular significance of the incidents, an Opposition Deputy had made a scathing analysis of the real character of the Italian-Austrian agreement. "Italian-Austrian relations," he had said, "give the impression of an edifice that is constantly in a state of repair, with a series of distinguished architects to measure, test, and try to find out the conditions of . . . equilibrium. The history of our Ministers for Foreign Affairs shows this: Depretis and Mancini wanted to correct Cairoli's formula: Crispi and di Robilant wanted to modify that of Depretis and Mancini: Prinetti wanted to change Crispi's methods: Tittoni and San Giuliano to ruin those of Prinetti . . . amidst all these restorative and healing formulas . . . the relations between the two States are in a permanent state of uneasiness."¹⁵

And if this was the general state of affairs when Salandra

assumed office, it did not improve during the first months of 1914. Although in April there was a meeting between San Giuliano and the Austrian minister Berchtold at Abbazia, and although they announced that they had arrived at an understanding marked by "complete and mutual trust," the results of the meeting were actually more aptly described by the *Berliner Tageblatt* as "nice and satisfactory, but without much content."¹⁶ They could in fact have no real content, because Austria had no intention of giving ground on the subject of her right to treat the Italians within the Austrian Empire as she chose, while Italian and Austrian interests were almost inevitably opposed in the Balkans and Albania. On the 1st May, 1914, moreover, disputes between Italians and Slovenes occurred in Trieste, and (as usual) were followed by demonstrations in Italy in the course of which the Austrian colours were insulted. Salandra, though forced to give Austria a certain amount of indirect satisfaction, certainly made no effort to meet in full the demands which Austria presented,¹⁷ and while Berchtold endeavoured to accept the situation with good grace the Governments of both countries remained irritated and hostile and on the *qui vive* for the renewal of provocative incidents. "The Italian people," wrote a German newspaper (the *National N. Zeitung*), "hates Austria, and has not given up its claims to Trent and Trieste. Whoever travels along the coast of Grado and Pola meets with a population that does not hide its love for Italy. In short, it . . . (the Austro-Italian friendship) is an armed friendship . . ." And this was the situation when on 28th June Francis Ferdinand and his wife were murdered, and a few weeks later Austria presented her ultimatum to Serbia.

The ultimatum took Italy completely by surprise. But Salandra's Government was quick to see that Austria's methods of action had placed her outside the terms of the Triple Alliance. In the first place, the Alliance was a defensive and not an offensive pact; and it certainly did not cover a war provoked by Austria and waged in Austrian interests. In the second place, Article I of the Treaty provided that the parties to it should discuss with each other all economic and political questions that might arise concerning their mutual interests;

and Austria had not made the least effort to consult her ally. Thirdly, Austria had directly violated the terms of Article VII, under which Austria and Italy had agreed to "use their influence to prevent all territorial changes which might be disadvantageous to the one or the other of the Powers signatory to the present treaty" and to this end "to keep each other informed of their intentions . . . should, however, the case arise that in the course of events Austria-Hungary in the Balkans or Italy should be obliged to change the *status quo* . . . by a temporary or permanent occupation, such occupation should only take place after previous agreement between the two Powers, which should have to be based on the principle of a reciprocal compensation for all territorial or other advantages that either of them might acquire over and above the existing *status quo*, and would have to satisfy the interests and rightful claims of both parties . . ."¹⁸ Lastly, by a special clause attached to the treaty of 1882 (and never abrogated) Italy was specifically exempted from intervention in any conflict which should involve her in a war with England—and it was soon very clear that England was to be drawn into the general conflict.

Considering these facts, neither the King nor the Cabinet felt any hesitation over issuing a declaration of non-intervention and neutrality based on the absence of a *casus foederis*.¹⁹ It was, however, another matter if from a diplomatic and official point of view neutrality could be maintained in a world conflict that from month to month showed signs of further extension. It was not as though Italy had no interests in the conflict. For over forty years the Italians of unredeemed Italy had been appealing for help against Austrian oppression and dreaming of a day when—liberated and free—they should be reunited with the mother country, either by means of a war of liberation or by means of successful diplomatic negotiation. If the Italian Government was now under no obligation to assist Austria, was it entirely without obligation towards its own nationals? When the opportunity had arisen of freeing Trieste and Trent, were they to be left to their fate? And in any event could any Italian Government contemplate with serenity an Austrian conquest of Serbia, with her subsequent

aggrandisement on the Adriatic and undoubted command of the Italian coastline?

These were points that inevitably had to be considered by the Government, irrespective of developments in the state of public opinion. And indeed San Giuliano from 25th July had been endeavouring to reach some understanding with Austria with regard to them. Having warned the Austrian Government that, unless it accepted the principle of "territorial compensation" contained in Article VII of the Treaty, the terms of the Triple Alliance could not be regarded as applicable to the present situation, he went on to explain firmly that "the only possible territorial compensation for us is the cession of a part of Austria's Italian provinces, corresponding to her territorial aggrandisement elsewhere."²⁰ To this Austria had replied with a curt refusal, indicating that she considered the subject of the unredeemed provinces to be beyond discussion. Considering the peculiar composition of the Austrian Empire, such a refusal was intelligible enough, because, as always, to recognize the national claims of the Italians was implicitly also to recognize the national claims of the Czechs, Slovenes, Ruthenians, and other oppressed peoples ruled by the Dual Monarchy.²¹ Equally, however, it was quite impossible for Italy to accept this fact as absolving her from her obligation to the unredeemed provinces, or as offering a reassuring guarantee for her national future. On the contrary, the more intransigent Austria became regarding *Italia Irredenta*, the worse inferences were to be drawn regarding her possible policy as an Adriatic Power. . . . It was therefore almost inevitable that, though the formal declaration of neutrality was published on 3rd August, 1914, Salandra should shortly after begin to regard intervention (on the side of the Entente) as inevitable. Intervention was inherent in the historical background of the situation, and in the peculiar logic of European politics which decreed that a negative element could not expect to acquire affirmative significance simply by the abstract justice of its demands. Besides, if Austria appeared more concerned with the idea of exerting indirect pressure on the Italian Government than with the idea of securing its spontaneous goodwill via the medium of recognizing Italian interests, other

countries were neither so psychologically blind nor so politically grudging. France had received the Italian declaration of neutrality with sympathy and even enthusiasm; Clemenceau had not failed to declare that the news that "Italy would not participate in the aggression against France had filled the heart of every Frenchman with joy and gratitude." And he had added significantly: "France, understanding the difficulty and delicacy of Italy's position, has not taken the initiative in making proposals, but if Italy may rest assured that her neutrality assures her the goodwill of France, (she may also be assured) that a more active participation (which may later be considered) would find France ready to engage herself regarding all the territorial gains or economic advantages to which Italy, in her interests, might lay claim."²² It was a difference in attitude that could not fail to impress any Government intent both on preserving the honour of its country and considering its future welfare; and indeed, while the negotiations with Austria dragged on, more and more factors seemed to range themselves on the side of France and the Entente, chief among them the natural, incalculable forces of popular sympathy.

For it was impossible at this date to ignore the accumulated store of hostility and suspicion and resentment that made the idea of actively supporting Austria seem anathema to the Italian people. Had the Alliance been with Germany alone, perhaps the memory of French policy during the Libyan War (which was still bitterly felt) would have stifled any instinctive francophilism. After all, when it came to negotiating with Italy, Germany was far from being inimical to Italy's case, displaying a reasonableness in this regard in marked contrast to Austria. But to intervene on behalf of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy—Italy's hereditary enemy—to fight side by side with soldiers who had recently been used to suppress Italians in the Trento and Trieste—this was like expecting water to run uphill.²³ Broadly speaking, indeed, public opinion might have been divided into three main currents.²⁴ The largest and most popular was still that of the Neutralists, which included the Conservatives and the Catholics and (curiously at one with them) the Left and Socialist groups, who disliked the

idea of war quite as much as the Vatican. They were moreover strengthened by the adherence of Giolitti's numerous followers and by the intellectual bourgeoisie, who still remembered the tradition of the Triple Alliance, who foresaw grave economic disequilibrium from participation in the conflict, and were, finally, in many ways very dependent on the capital which Germany had invested in Italy. Apart from these there existed a relatively small but active group in favour of intervention on the side of the Entente, including of course the Nationalists and the leaders of the Irredentist movement. Sharing their general aim, if not their views, were the Republicans, always sincere friends of France, and the Masons, known to be inspired (and to be far too closely and unpatriotically inspired) by French Masonic organizations. With them there was a small section of the Socialists, led by a young Socialist recently excommunicated by his party—Benito Mussolini; and supporting their general attitude, and diffusing their ideas, was a large section of the Press, for the Press was almost unanimously in favour of participation in the conflict on the side of France.²⁵ Lastly, apart from these two tendencies there was the great mass of the people, ignorant of political questions and as yet untouched by propaganda—people desirous only of being left in peace to go about their work. Actually, however, they were day by day being marshalled into one of the two opposing camps; and as the Entente possessed a vastly superior method of propagating its ideas, it was inevitable that sympathy with it should rapidly increase. As the progress of the war made isolation seem an evasion of responsibility, so the news from the French and Belgian fronts revived the old feeling of Latin community, of racial and cultural affinity. The very fact that the French communiqués were written in a language remarkable for precision, grace, and style helped to make them acceptable to a public who regarded French as their second language, while the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had plainly to inform the Austrian Foreign Office that the news disseminated by the Central Powers was not adapted to the Italian mentality and, being marked by an "antiquated, reactionary, feudal and clerical tone," was liable to do their cause "more harm than good."²⁶

Considering these divisions in public opinion, the best policy for the Government at this moment was obviously to play for time—to avoid committing Italy to one side or the other and wait until the general feelings excited by the conflict had gathered character and strength. Side by side with the mobilization of hatred against Austria there had to be mobilization of the indignant pity felt for Belgium and the instinctive impulse to help France, and this could scarcely be accomplished overnight by the issuing of official declarations. Besides, analysing the various factors which must determine his policy, Salandra could not have failed to see that the one predominating over all others was Italy's unpreparedness. On this point it would have been difficult to exaggerate,²⁷ and the best proof of it was the condition of the Army.

Although the Libyan War had amply demonstrated the courage and fighting capacity of the soldiers, it had also (as we have seen) demonstrated the defects in the Army's organization. These defects had not been made good in the interim: and what was worse, the supplies and material consumed by the campaign had not been replaced.²⁸ The Army was still suffering from much the same handicaps as before, plus the strain and fatigue of the war. So far as equipment and supplies were concerned, Salandra had to face the unpleasant truth that almost a year's preparation would be necessary before it would be possible to order a general mobilization.²⁹ Between November and March 1914 there could for instance be no question of the Army's undertaking a campaign in the Trentino and the Alps, because of the lack of military stores suited to winter weather and the lack of adequate winter clothing for the soldiers.³⁰ It could not moreover be said that there existed anything like a sufficient supply of trained officers for hostilities on a large scale—and this was a point of greater significance in Italy than elsewhere, because the rank and file of the Army were likely to respond with particular sensitiveness to the kind of inspiration and leadership they received. Not only had too much socialist and pacifist teaching been allowed to penetrate the barracks and sap the soldier's morale, but the Army as an organism was still suffering from the ill-effects of the work it had been forced to undertake at

home.³¹ The soldiers had too often been used to repress popular disorders, had too often been used, as a weapon in civil disputes, to identify themselves at once and spontaneously with the nation. Though the Libyan War had done much to win them glory and popularity, it had not quite healed the breach created by the bitter memories of the Sicilian risings, and Pelloux's proclamation of a state of siege, and the recent repression of "Red Week." If a great and imminent danger had appeared, its very pressure would have obliterated the past and drawn the various elements of the nation together in an instinctive defence of the common cause. But at this time (as has been said) a declaration of war could be nothing but a declaration in cold blood—a thing without that supreme and unifying effect produced in countries whose territory was invaded, or who felt their national interests vitally menaced. As Salandra said, there was lacking in Italy not only the "material preparation" for a war, but the "spiritual preparation"—that preparation which would have permitted the swift regimentation of public opinion and the immediate integration of all sentiments in a national pattern.³² Indeed, how could a people that had still to find itself, suddenly exhibit the self-assurance and solidarity natural to nations whose unity was the product of centuries of common existence?

This was in essence the problem with which Salandra's Government had to reckon at home, while at the same time it endeavoured to deal with the situation abroad. It explains the attitude he adopted in negotiating with the Entente and with the Central Powers respectively; an attitude which found its clearest expression in his speech of 14th October, 1914, when, San Giuliano having died, he himself assumed the interim portfolio of Foreign Affairs and issued an official statement of Italy's position. "The guiding principles of our international policy (he said) will be the same. . . . To persevere with them requires unshakable firmness of spirit, a serene vision of the real interests of the country, and a maturity of reflection which in case of need shall not exclude readiness for action. It is necessary to have courage, not for words, but for work; it is necessary to have a spirit free from every

preconception, from every prejudice, from every sentiment which is not that of exclusive and unlimited devotion to our country, of *sacred egoism for Italy*." Taken out of the context of Italian life it was speech that lent itself to unfair interpretation, and indeed Salandra's last phrase was immediately seized on, given fortuitous fame, and branded as a particularly vicious exhibition of national self-seeking. The Austrian Government (at that moment disinterestedly advancing the cause of humanity in Serbia) did not hesitate to speak of the "cynicism" of the formula of "sacred egoism," and at a later date, when the Allied Powers were allocating the prizes of victory, not a few Entente newspapers expressed their indignation over such a distressing exhibition of national self-preoccupation. Indeed, objectively considered, the phrase was a diplomatic *gaffe*, and one that unfortunately was to be repeated in Italian diplomacy, because Italian statesmen as a whole were still outside the current of Entente ideology, and were still unaware of the harm they could do their cause among Entente diplomats by failure to give it the right documentation.

Meanwhile, too, Salandra was being faced with other difficulties, for his Cabinet was far from being a strong one. The death of San Giuliano meant the appointment of a new Foreign Minister, the growing importance of military affairs demanded changes in the Ministry for War, and the needs of the Ministry for War demanded in turn a Finance Minister less rigorously attached to the Budget than Rubini, and less rigorously opposed to the idea of mobilization.³³ So far as the Minister of War was concerned, General Grandi, though a loyal and honest soldier, had shown himself to be lacking in the qualities necessary for such an administrative position.³⁴ Deficient in energy, he was also deficient in organizing capacity and had not the right personality to control or inspire his subordinates. He was moreover at odds with the heads of the General Staff, and the friction between the two departments certainly did not add to the efficiency of military organization. By October 1914 it was obvious that he could not much longer continue at his post, and in fact when he resigned Salandra already had his successor in view—General

Zupelli.³⁵ Zupelli possessed strength of will and a supreme gift for mastering detailed work. He did not hesitate to ask for some hundreds of millions for the organization of the Army, and his request, after some initial attempts at compromise, provoked the resignation of the entire Cabinet (31st October). Salandra, re-entrusted with the duty of forming a Government, tried this time both to strengthen its base in Parliament and to increase its general prestige.³⁶ Turning to the Left, he invited the collaboration of V. E. Orlando (Justice) and Paolo Carcano (Treasury), while from the Right he selected Sonnino (Foreign Affairs) and Grippo (Public Instruction). While there could be no doubt of the many merits of his choice, there could equally be little doubt of its drawbacks. Orlando, eloquent, keenly intelligent and widely cultured, was *a priori* well suited to be Minister for Justice; but his political views were not likely to harmonize overwell with those of his colleagues and were sure to cause some weakening dissensions in the Cabinet later. As regards Sonnino, while it was true that no Italian politician enjoyed greater authority and respect both at home and abroad, it was also true that his character (apart from his intellectual gifts) was not suitable to diplomacy. Even Salandra admitted that he "lacked the quality of a negotiator,"³⁷ and considering the importance of such a quality, its absence was likely to have a baneful effect on Italy's international future. Indeed, Sonnino's culture, integrity, and wide knowledge of political questions were again to be set at a disadvantage by his unfortunate difficulty in communication, his rigid temper, and his lack of address in human contacts.

The formation of the new Cabinet, however, seemed to indicate the beginning of a new and more active phase in Italy's policy of neutrality. In presenting his Government to Parliament (3rd December, 1914) Salandra declared explicitly that Italy had "vital interests to protect" and "just aspirations" which she must "affirm and sustain." He added accordingly that "Italian neutrality should not be inert and indolent but active and watchful . . . not impotent, but powerfully armed and ready for any event . . ."³⁸ And the Camera supported his words by a vote of 413 to 49, on an order of the day

favourable to the Government, submitted by the hon. Bettolo.³⁹ Reinforced by such support, Sonnino as Minister for Foreign Affairs lost no time in adopting a more assertive tone in his relations with Austria, showing that he meant either to obtain some satisfaction regarding the unredeemed provinces or else consider a complete reorientation of Italy's position abroad.⁴⁰ In point of fact, however, Austria either did not believe that Italy would take part in the conflict, or else did not consider it worth while to retain her support. The Italian proposals for a rectification of the frontier on the Alps were again curtly rejected, and in March 1915 Sonnino took the decisive step and turned to the Entente.

He found England (who was first approached) sympathetically disposed to consider Italy's arguments and ready to support them in the face of some opposition from Russia.⁴¹ France, having already indicated her goodwill, might be expected to give her approval to whatever engagement was reached with England. In general, the four main points which had to be settled were: the liberation of Italians living under foreign rule; the achievement by Italy of a frontier on the Alps strategically adequate to protect her from invasion; the acquisition of sufficient territory and key positions in the Adriatic to guard against the danger of an enlarged South Slav State arising after the war and menacing the Italian coastline; finally the extension of Italy's interests as a Mediterranean Power by the allotment of a share in the eventual partition of the territory formerly ruled by the Ottoman Empire.⁴² These proposals were clearly far larger in scope than those that had been made to Austria; and the difference in character was almost inevitable, since in asking concessions from Austria, Italy was perforce asking concessions that could only be satisfied at the expense of the Austrian Empire. The case was entirely different with the Powers of the Entente. The readjustment of territory which Italy claimed concerned only the lands of their enemies, and would moreover only have to be paid in the event of victory. Indeed, in the end, the Treaty of London, signed on 25th April, 1915, was almost too lavish in its promises; and had Sonnino been a more experienced diplomat he might perhaps have considered it wiser to be

content with the promise of less and the surety of really obtaining what was promised. It was for instance ominous for Italy that the patriotic promoters of the future Yugoslavia should almost immediately have protested strongly against Italian claims to Dalmatia. And apart from this, it should have been clear that France and England as the two great colonial Powers in Africa would not in the end feel enthusiasm over admitting Italy to an eventual share in the redistribution of territory there. The treaty, in short, with its comprehensive donations and large promises was perfectly calculated to inspire great expectations, and when the time came to realize them, to serve as an apple of discord thrown among all those interested in its provisions.

Its (the Treaty of London's) chief clauses promised the cession to Italy (in the event of an Allied victory) of the Trentino and Upper Adige as far as the Brenner Pass, with Trieste, Istria, and Dalmatia as far South as Cape Planka, Valona, and some form of special influence over Albania; in addition, Italy was to receive the islands of Lussin and Cherso in the Adriatic, Rhodes and the Dodecanese and a part of Asia Minor (if it were partitioned) and some compensation in Africa in the event of France and England notably increasing their possessions there. Almost from the beginning there was a minority of Socialists who disapproved of these terms and who, sharply criticizing the ambitions and principles which had inspired Sonnino, weakened Italy's position before the Allied Powers. Apart from this, ill-will soon began to surround the Italian claims because, beginning as a demand for the restoration of national rights, they seemed to have become a general demand for national aggrandisement. It was a demand by no means restricted to Italy, as the treaties of Versailles, Saint-Germain, Neuilly, and Trianon were to demonstrate; but its expression at this particular moment was unfortunate and gave rise to later warnings and complaints to President Wilson (always vulnerable to skilfully directed argument) regarding "Italian Imperialism."

In 1915, however, its terms remained strictly secret. Although sincere currents of sympathy for the cause of the Allies gained ground with the public, they were unaccom-

panied by knowledge that the country had been committed by a diplomatic agreement, and while many active spirits protested restlessly against the rôle of international passivity which they thought the Government had assigned Italy in international affairs, the neutralists still nourished hopes of preventing Italy's entry into the conflict. In this way there arose a movement of subterranean opposition to Salandra's Government (especially among the neutralists), and though his Ministry demonstrated its efficiency and capacity in preparing for national defence, it found itself compelled to face a growing body of hostile opinion in Parliament.⁴³ The truth was that interventionism, though it had conquered a large part of "the piazza," had not succeeded in penetrating Montecitorio,⁴⁴ where the remnants of Giolitti's majority (still faithfully obeying their chief) were determined to bring about the Ministry's fall.

Matters were brought to a crisis by the return of D'Annunzio from France and his delivery of a fiery oration at Quarto, designed to commemorate the Expedition of the Thousand.⁴⁵ It was a magnificent occasion to revive the glory of the Risorgimento wars and play on any patriotic feelings people might possess, and he made the most of it. In this speech, as in the addresses which followed in the next weeks, he struck the note at once passionate and idealistic most likely to awaken the country to a new spirit. It was said later that his lofty thought was beyond the comprehension of the majority, and in a technical sense this was perhaps true. But his words produced an incalculable effect on intellectuals and students and on those who were (quite simply) vulnerable to emotional appeals.⁴⁶ These people did not need to comprehend his thought. They responded to his eloquence as a quivering violin-string responds to the touch of a virtuoso, following his speeches with the excitement and dazzled wonder of men hearing for the first time in their lives the *Eroica*, and instinctively, unconsciously, attuning their lives to its rhythm. Martial enthusiasm, desire for conquest, national self-glorification would not alone have stirred them fervently to demand a declaration of war, if only because the language of self-interest offered no ideal inspiration and no impulse strong enough to

suppress the comfortable instincts of everyday life. But D'Annunzio's appeal was of a different kind. It ennobled conflict and made of war less a sordid means of destruction than a spiritual ordeal designed to test the worth and quality of man.⁴⁷ It was because D'Annunzio and his supporters seemed to have offered them a new vision, seemed to have aroused in them a new and supreme sense of humanity, that (tragic irony) the best youth in the country asked its politicians to intervene. They wanted to aid not merely the lost provinces but France and Belgium and an ideal cause, reconquering somehow or other those spiritual values that in the long history of Italian politics had been degraded and lost to sight. To join in the war seemed, from this point of view, an act of faith, a tangible affirmation of belief in a cause that, neither explicitly formulated nor intellectually understood, was still an emotional and spiritual force. "It was," wrote Benedetto Croce later, "as if Italy were under an inspiration which impelled her to play the part in the human drama assigned to her by the logic of history or, as the popular language of the time put it, as if she were driven by fate."⁴⁸

This feeling was, however, very far from being shared by the convinced neutralists and their leader. Pessimistic as always, Giolitti did not believe in Italy's capacity to sustain a war or take worthy part in an international conflict. He did not hesitate (in private) to explain his lack of faith in the soldiers, in the organization of the Army, and in the resistance of the country, adding at the same time that he foresaw an Austrian invasion as far as Verona, and a consequent revolution in the kingdom.⁴⁹ It was perhaps in terms of these convictions—as also in terms of his own private ambition—that he began to tighten his organization of the parliamentary opposition against Salandra, returning to Rome to test the political atmosphere, and receiving the more or less open adherence of some three hundred Deputies and one hundred Senators at his private home in the Via Cavour. He was now, indeed, considered as a *power sui generis*—a power outside the "King, Government and institutions," and certain of his most sensitive supporters felt it incumbent on them to warn Salandra's secretary of the tempest brewing against him.⁵⁰

Salandra took what measures he could. He consulted the King; he interviewed Giolitti; he sent the most Giolittian of his ministers to discuss the situation with the former Prime Minister. Finally, since none of these steps availed and it was obvious that his Government would be defeated on the reopening of Parliament, he had to resort to an extreme step: he resigned. "The Council of Ministers," it was declared, "has decided to present its resignation to the King, in consideration of the fact that the Government's policy in international affairs does not enjoy the consent and agreement of those constitutional parties whose consent is required by the gravity of the situation."⁵¹

The declaration was a master-stroke. News of it had no sooner spread abroad than the general public rebelled—and rebelled angrily—against the manoeuvres of the neutralists and the intrigues of Giolitti. Consulted by the King, Giolitti had to admit himself unprepared to return to office, and though a majority of the Deputies continued hostile to Salandra, the King in accordance with popular sentiment and the will of the country recalled him.⁵² He received a popular ovation, and the Camera, putting the best face it could on the situation, proceeded to give his new Cabinet their adherence. On 20th May, 1915, the Government received full powers to deal with what was felt to be a situation of emergency; on 23rd May the mobilization of the Army was ordered; and on 24th May war was declared against Austria, to be followed later by declarations against Germany, Turkey, and Bulgaria. The episode had been a curious one, in that it had shown the King defying parliamentary procedure in order to preserve the spirit of a representative régime; and however justified he was by events and the obvious popularity of Salandra's policy, there could be no doubt that it represented an unfortunate instance of the weakness into which parliamentary institutions had drifted.⁵³

Still, had Salandra been more of a strategist in parliamentary affairs it is probable that he would (with so enthusiastic a following) have remained in power a very considerable period. But he was handicapped by the course of events on the Italian front and his own difficulties at home. At the front the deficiencies inherent in the country's over-rapid preparation

made themselves grievously felt. The lack of big artillery, the inadequate character of the munitions and of the material necessary for war, placed the troops at a disadvantage and took a heavy toll of lives, when General Cadorna (over-anxious to achieve victory) launched a series of frontal attacks on an Austrian line that occupied a naturally strong position.⁵⁴ Certainly the bad news which followed was not in any way Salandra's fault, but people tended to express their anxiety in hostile criticism of his government, and his habits of reticence contributed perhaps to their irritation. Indeed, political leader as he was, he had not realized that so severe a national crisis required to be met by a national policy and something like a National-Coalition Government. So far as participation in the country's affairs was concerned, he had continued to use the methods normally used in times of peace, behaving with great correctness, but neither encouraging offers of collaboration nor seeking to co-ordinate opposing energies in a movement of general defence.⁵⁵ It would, for instance, not have been difficult for him to win over the support of the Radical and Estrema groups, and include their representatives (if not in the Cabinet) at least in the Government's activity; but he had been too absorbed in his work to consider such a gesture, and had allowed them to go their way without reflecting that his Cabinet was in this fashion being isolated from the country's life, and surrounded with an atmosphere of aloofness. Perhaps Sonnino's personality had influenced him in this regard. For uncommunicative and cold as ever, the Minister for Foreign Affairs had remained a man detached from the rank and file of the Deputies in Parliament, as he was detached from the current of popular sympathy outside.⁵⁶ The neutralists still resented his active policy, and a large section of the interventionists both disliked his methods of dealing with the Central Powers, and disapproved of his idea of declaring war on Austria alone, instead of on Austria and Germany simultaneously. Dissatisfaction, in short, existed in sufficient proportion to ruin the Ministry should any provocation be forthcoming—and, unfortunately, Salandra gave his enemies the chance they required in an improvised speech at Turin. Speaking of the great work which still remained to be done, he declared, among other

things, that "the government of the country belonged to the Liberals."⁵⁷ Taken in the context of his philosophy, the phrase meant only that the government of the country belonged to men of moderate and generous ideas, but it was immediately twisted by the Giolittians into a "demand for a monopoly by the Conservatives." In this form it roused the resentment of the "popular" elements in Parliament—and democrats, neutralists, and interventionists united in a wave of opposition. The Government (though by a narrow margin) found itself defeated—and Salandra, seeing that circumstances required a Government on a wider basis than he himself commanded, advised the King to summon Paolo Boselli. It was advice typical of Salandra's integrity; for, had he wished, he could have regained power, and gratified his love for his country by continuing to direct its affairs. To put forward Boselli instead, was to renounce personal advancement, and—something much harder to a man of his temperament—a great opportunity for disinterested work in the service of a national ideal.

Boselli for many reasons seemed a man really suited to the task of forming a national Cabinet, and reconciling divers factions to the needs and exigencies of a united political front. He possessed a tolerant mind, was naturally disposed to moderate measures, and held a position in Parliament sufficiently detached from parliamentary conflicts to assure him the reputation of impartiality. Unfortunately, however, he was lacking in those qualities of will and energy necessary to a leader of political parties. Though he could always preside over the meetings of his Cabinet—he could rarely, if ever, dominate them. This did not at first seem of great importance, since the notable Italian victory of Gorizia in 1916 surrounded his assumption of power with a halo of success. But within six months' time, when news from the front was again bad, and men's nerves were frayed by the strain and tension of events, conflicts broke out in the Cabinet and he showed himself unable to resolve them. While Bissolati and Sonnino (retained for Minister for Foreign Affairs) came to loggerheads over the question of expansion in Albania, an equally bitter dissension sprang up between the more Conservative elements of the Government and V. E. Orlando, who was now Minister for Internal Affairs. The issue was that

of the policy to be pursued towards the Socialists and Pacifists, who, with their public disapproval of the war, were steadily weakening both the Army's and the public's morale. Orlando, of marked Left views himself, favoured a *laissez-faire* policy and an attempt to win over, rather than repress, the agitators. Others—and among them the distinguished Socialist Bissolati—wanted urgent measures against all “disintegrators of national resistance”—and, while the events of the war demanded more coherence and union at home, disagreement in the Cabinet reached a point where it was decided that Orlando should resign. Shortly after, on 23rd October, 1917, there came the grievous news of Caporetto and the Army's retreat. It was not a situation that could be confronted by a crumbling Cabinet; and while Boselli resigned three days later, Orlando assumed the premiership and retained the portfolio of Internal Affairs.

It seemed at first sight a strange event. Was not the Parliament which now acclaimed him as the man of the hour and the leader to deliver Italy from the worst crisis of the war, the same Parliament as had recently accused him of weakness and demanded his resignation? In reality, the inconsistency was due to more than a change of circumstances; adversity was the thing required to bring out what was best in Orlando, and give him the pre-eminence he deserved. For he was more than a clever man equipped with useful talents.⁵⁸ To a brilliant, sensitive mind he united a generous heart and a remarkable power of understanding. In practical politics he had indeed been handicapped by the very quality of his intellect, which, balancing and weighing all the merits of a question, put him at a disadvantage in decision. Speaking one day to a friend, he had said of himself, “the truth is that when I am confronted with a problem, I cannot do less than consider with fairness all its aspects, even those which are against me: and this seems weakness.” And he had added after a moment, “Indeed, in politics it *is* weakness.” Certainly this had been the reason for his opponents' distrust and charges of ambiguity in political affairs. They trusted him now, however, because they knew that Caporetto was an issue beyond the range of humanist doubts—an issue that would attract all the forces of Orlando's mind, yet leave his decision unshaken. Apart from this, more-

over, they knew that no speaker in Parliament possessed his 'golden gift of speech,' and remembering the effect of his eloquence on other occasions, hoped he would inspire the country to surmount the disasters it had experienced.

He was able to fulfil their hopes because he knew not only how to restore confidence, but what was infinitely more vital—how to snatch moral victory from defeat. When he spoke in the Camera in the weeks following the news of Caporetto, it seemed as if Italy had found new and invulnerable weapons of defence. "The situation," he said, "would not be discussed; it would be accepted and faced: Italy would resist if the Army had to fall back to the Straits of Messina—would resist in the face of all dangers and difficulties; would, in fact, resist, resist, *resist!*" It was not alone the Deputies who sprang to their feet in answer to that speech. The morale of the nation emerged from the shadows of vacillation and doubt, and people vied with one another in generous competition to meet the sacrifices asked by the time. There was no more talk of the defeatist kind formerly expressed in the Socialist saying, "next winter not another man in the trenches."⁵⁹ The very Socialist Deputies who had done so much to break the "front at home" now rallied to the work of repairing it. Soldiers and civilians collaborated in reorganizing and re-equipping the Army, and in the long winter of 1917-18, many military shortcomings were at last made good.

The effort involved in this work was perhaps no greater than in other belligerent countries, but in the context of Italian circumstances, it was profoundly and extraordinarily felt. From the beginning the country had been unusually penalized by the fact of its natural poverty. Even in time of peace Italy had been compelled to import over one-third of her total grain consumption, while so far as fuel was concerned, lack of natural resources meant that coal must come from England over a sea-route more than two thousand miles long. With the communication difficulties created by the war, with the disorganization of shipping and trade, shortage both of food and fuel placed a heavy burden on every element in the nation, and while men spoke with enthusiasm of the gifts which must be made to the troops, only the common people themselves knew

the grim war of attrition that went on in civilian ranks to prevent economic strain from becoming economic collapse. Perhaps in this regard the news of the Army's success helped more than anything else. Though some French and English contingents later arrived as reinforcements, the Fourth Italian Army succeeded by itself in establishing a new line of resistance on the Piave, and in holding it despite repeated and heavy Austrian attacks. On the anniversary of Caporetto, moreover, a brilliant offensive was begun, and at the final battle of Vittorio-Veneto,⁶⁰ one of the most important of the war, the Austrian Army and the forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire went down to final defeat. With over 600,000 prisoners in the hands of the Italians, and with 7,000 guns captured by them, Austria asked for an armistice, and the war on the Italian front was at an end.

The cessation of hostilities was greeted with scenes of almost delirious enthusiasm. Vittorio-Veneto was hailed as an event which had cancelled the memory of Adowa, Lissa, and Custoza, while the fact that a contingent of French troops had been associated with the Italians in the final campaign was regarded as a new instance of the comradeship already sealed on the fields of Solferino and Magenta. And yet people's jubilation was short-lived. Within a few months it was succeeded by a feeling of disillusionment and bitterness almost as profound as the preceding joy. It was said that Italy had been victorious on the battlefield and defeated at the peace; it was said that her losses (14 per cent of her population) and her sacrifices (the dislocation of her economic system) were neither understood by her Allies nor appreciated; it was said finally that her claims—and her claims alone among the victorious Powers—were set in an atmosphere of unfriendly detachment and denied sympathetic support.

This latter point was one that had vital significance for the Italian people. While it was true that they had not known of the Treaty of London during the first part of the War and had fought for ends as morally disinterested as those of most of the combatants, it was also true that in 1919 they were fully aware of what their Government was entitled to claim, and they failed to understand the negotiations at Paris which deprived them

of what they had been taught to expect. It was not very helpful in this regard to advance ideal arguments in favour of renunciation. The Italians as a whole took a practical view of the peace. It seemed to them that everything of which they stood in vital need was being discussed—coal, iron, settlement colonies, protective frontiers, reparations. They saw that the colonial empires of the two great colonial Powers were being notably increased; they saw that frontiers all over the world were being adjusted to include (or exclude) oilfields, minerals, raw materials of all kinds, and finally even railways and rivers; they saw that minorities were being refused the right of plebiscite and carelessly handed over to alien rulers; they saw that the principle of self-determination was being used as a convenient formula for adjusting the balance of power in one's own, or one's allies', interests; and they were unable to resist the view that what was taking place was less the foundation of a new world order, than a general struggle for national advantage. In short, they felt that the compensation which was being withheld their suffering in the war, was being withheld less in the interests of abstract justice than in the interest of peoples whose claims were little better, if any better, than their own.

In fairness it should be remarked that the situation in regard to Italy's claims was a very delicate one. Certain of her demands were met at once. She was allowed to rectify her exposed North-Eastern frontier and make the great wall of the Alps her national defence—and this, though gratification of her strategical needs meant the inclusion within the Italian Kingdom of large slices of territory inhabited by German-Austrians.⁶¹ She received without question the old unredeemed provinces with Trieste and Trent and the Istrian Peninsula and Pola; but irreconcilable disputes broke out over the Dalmatian coast, Fiume, and the general question of the Adriatic.⁶² Here matters were complicated by the fact that the lands promised to Italy by the Treaty of London were no longer enemy-lands, but to all intents and purposes lands claimed by an Allied Power. For though the Croats and Slovenes had fought against Italy in the Great War, and been foremost in resisting her Navy, they were now incorporated in the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Yugoslavia was a kingdom founded chiefly in the interests of

Serbia—Serbia, who had resisted the Central Powers against incredible odds and suffered almost more at their hands than anyone else. From the Serbian point of view it was only natural that Dalmatia and Fiume and the Adriatic coastline should form part of her new South Slav State; and indeed, so far as Serbia was concerned, possession of the hinterland was useless without them. Equally, however, from the Italian point of view, it was difficult to see why by a stroke of the pen the Croats and Slovenes should be suddenly erected into allies—and, above all, why the large Italian minorities on the Adriatic should be resigned without protest to Serbia.⁶³ It was true that the Italian population was largely mixed with the Slavs, and that it occupied only a fringe of the coast, and sometimes not even that. But in the case of Fiume, for instance, the city contained 25,000 Italians against 26,000 Slavs, and the Italians at the end of the war had organized a provisional Government and formally proclaimed their annexation to Italy.⁶⁴

Fiume was, moreover, the stumbling-block. Although it lay outside the territory assigned to Italy by the Treaty of London, the Italian delegation put forward a claim based on the declaration made by the Italian section of the inhabitants, and refused to give up the city to the Yugoslav sovereignty, while the Yugoslavs in turn would not give up their chief and best navigable port. There remained, too, the problem of Dalmatia and the Islands promised to Italy, and regarding these also, neither side would give way. Actually perhaps matters might not have reached an impasse if it had not been for the attitude of President Wilson. But the Yugoslavs had made so much of his help and given such praise to his understanding, that it seemed to him little less than a moral duty to secure their aspirations—and in pursuit of moral duty no one was more determined than Wilson. Although some minor concessions to Italy were wrung from him in April 1919, on the twentieth of that month he withdrew from the discussions, and on the twenty-third took the unprecedented step of publishing a memorandum, setting forth his views and implicitly appealing to the Italian people over the heads of their accredited representatives.

The Italian delegation replied to the discourtesy by drafting

a trenchant reply and leaving Paris. Popular support, they felt, was necessary to the situation—and returning to Italy, they received it. At every point on their route they met with demonstrations of enthusiasm, and in Rome the Camera approved their policy by a vote of 382 to 40.⁶⁵ Thus fortified, they returned to Paris—to find that the main European problems had been settled in their absence, and that little remained to be done except to join the Allies in presenting the Peace Treaty to the German delegation. Their chance of playing a decisive rôle—of making their voice respected in the counsels of Europe and, failing that, of bargaining for one concession against another—was gone. Discussions on the Adriatic question were leisurely resumed, were allowed to drag on, and to continue so fruitlessly that in June, when Orlando returned to Rome, he returned empty handed. As a result, he received in the Camera a bitterly hostile vote, and resigned.

Not even at the time of Caporetto had the country suffered such an unequalled feeling of disillusionment, pain, and anger. It was known that in the last stages of the struggle France (under the influence of Tardieu) had sought to intervene on Italy's behalf and assist her in obtaining some favour from Wilson; but in general people felt that after three years' fighting in a common cause, their allies had failed them psychologically. It was very far from being the loss of material advantages that hurt most. It was that "manque de cordialité," that failure to treat them with the same regard as the other great peoples of Europe, that seemed to put them in an unfairly inferior place.⁶⁶ Even the *Corriere della Sera*, which was a paper far from being extreme or nationalistic in tone, could not do less than record the general impression.

"Nearly everyone has succeeded in reaching an understanding with Wilson over straining the famous Fourteen Points—the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Czechs, and the English have obtained from him plenary indulgence; Clemenceau and the Japanese have obtained strong partial indulgence. It is unfortunately only Italy for whom Wilson has reserved the full discharge of his intransigency. . . . Every scrap of territory that lies outside linguistic frontiers is fought over with Italy . . . (but) Yugoslavia is pardoned the occupation of the

ancient German town of Klagenfurt after the Armistice has been in force seven months. The one is treated as an adversary, as a kind of Turk's head; the other as a pupil for whom the tutor has every forgiveness. *How can this inequality of treatment not offend and wound us?*"⁶⁷

Meanwhile, however, a dynamic force had thrust its way into the pattern of circumstance and was deranging its normal design. In September 1919 D'Annunzio had recruited a band of volunteers and had audaciously and quite unwarrantably occupied Fiume. Nor could he be persuaded to evacuate it. While the Yugoslavs complained, while the Allies expressed their strong surprise and disapproval, while the Italian Government (urged on by the Powers) endeavoured vainly to assert its authority—the poet remained serenely encamped in the disputed territory, trusting to the obvious popularity which surrounded his enterprise, and to the fact that no Italian Government could dislodge him without provoking a revolution. Certainly it was not a helpful background to negotiation. In April 1920 the English and French Premiers thankfully agreed at the Conference of San Remo that the matter should be settled by direct discussions between Italy and Yugoslavia; and in November the Treaty of Rapallo was finally drafted and signed. It represented a somewhat dubious compromise. Italy received Zara, with its adjacent communes, and the islands of Cherso, Lussin, Lagosta, and Pelagosa, but Dalmatia went to Yugoslavia with Lissa and the rest of the islands. Fiume was abruptly divided from its small annex of Susak (which passed to Yugoslavia) and the town itself with its port was declared a free city under the guardianship of the League of Nations. The Italian Government of the day succeeded in imposing the Treaty on Parliament by skilfully concealing some of its clauses;⁶⁸ D'Annunzio was ejected (January 1921) and the matter appeared to be finally settled. It was, however, neither settled nor ended. After the rise to power of Signor Mussolini a special arrangement was made with Yugoslavia by which Fiume passed definitely and permanently under Italian sovereignty (January 1924).

In the end, therefore, Italy had little cause to be dissatisfied with the solution of the Adriatic problem. But the trouble was

that this satisfaction was achieved mainly in 1920 and 1924, in the teeth of opposition, and in circumstances which made it seem rather a hostage wrested from fortune than a concession made by friendly Powers to an ally, or even a prize won as the result of a victory. Nothing is more deceiving than to enumerate Italy's *ultimate* gains from the War as if they had been received at the time of the Peace Conference. In point of fact, it was the situation abroad, and the difficulty of establishing a compromise between the demands of the Italian nation, and the ideas of the European Powers that ruined the Government of Orlando, that struck an irremediable blow at the Cabinet of Nitti, and that drove Giolitti from power. For even if the question of the Adriatic and the Northern Frontier were put aside, the other setbacks Italy had received in her claims were severe. In the colonial field Germany's former possessions and the rich provinces taken from Turkey had been partitioned without her obtaining more than negligible concessions, despite the fact that she had stronger arguments to put forward in support of her need of colonies than in support of anything else. With her overcrowded population (of which in the years just before the War 400,000 had emigrated annually), with her lack of raw materials to enable industry to absorb her surplus people, with, finally, her own colonial possessions unsuitable to settlement by whites—her failure to secure new territory fitted for expansion, not only exasperated the feeling of international humiliation, but added to it a sense of permanent grievance. Perhaps it was not altogether surprising that (as one writer noted) “. . . the idea that the War could be said to have been lost, as far as national ends were concerned, spread among the masses, who already felt the pinch of economic conditions, unemployment, and the difficulties of a return to normal occupations, and all this produced in many social strata almost a subconscious rancour . . .” a rancour that, directed mainly against their Government, harassed succeeding Ministries and contrived gravely to undermine the stability of a State already threatened by social and political unrest.

EPILOGUE

EVEN in France and England, the end of the War was marked by social disturbances, and in neither of these countries was the struggle for life so intense as in Italy.

<i>In equal gold units</i>						
			1914		1925	
			<i>Wealth</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Wealth</i>	<i>Income</i>
Italy ..	..	..	596	105	553	107
France ..	..	..	1,455	182	1,306	196
Great Britain	..	..	1,471	237	2,600	419
U.S.A.	..	..	2,040	337	3,333	614

Already retarded in recovery by this deficiency in wealth, the country passed through a period of acute economic difficulties and was unable to find its equilibrium. For three years industry had suffered from shortage of those materials necessary to its functioning, and had moreover been artificially organized with a view to producing the necessities of war. It could not now easily return to the conditions of peace, or regain the rhythm it had lost. Besides, taxes were high, and the figures of the National Debt frightening ciphers that no one dared translate into terms of practical reality. A bread subsidy which the Government had been forced to grant during the War was still imposing an annual drain of millions on the Treasury; increased numbers of demobilized men were being forced to demand state relief; there was the need of restoring the devastated areas on the country's north-eastern frontier; and, impeding any financial settlement, there was the ever-present problem of depreciated currency.

Apart from these difficulties, moreover, there was the difficulty created by the fact that such prosperity as existed was concentrated mainly in the hands of certain classes (notably the big industrialists and landowners and war profiteers), and the condition of the peasants and workers was definitely bad. With the rise in the cost of living, and the continued scarcity of food, riots by exasperated crowds occurred in some of the principal cities (July 1919) and about the same time the peasants unex-

pectedly rebelled against their hardships and forcibly occupied the land that had too long been denied them. Nor did their actions lack the stimulus of Bolshevik propaganda. During the war the extremist elements responsible for "Red Week" had strengthened their influence in some of the northern provinces, where their hold over local municipalities often suggested that Communism was about to be gloriously and instantly established. In the Romagna and Emilia especially, so-called "Red Leagues" had grown up, and while their activities terrorized the countryside, their ideas had received outside support from the news of the Russian Revolution, brought back from the front by soldiers bitterly disappointed in the impoverished exhausted Italy that could not so much as employ them. Since the Government appeared to have no idea of social reform, these men and the masses of whom they formed part were easily moved to adopt revolutionary ideas. Attacks on employers and landlords began to seem attacks on injustice personified; violence, intimidation, and coercion were hailed as the natural weapons of the oppressed; and when enthusiasm appeared to be flagging, reminders of the happy conditions prevailing in the "paradise of Lenin" urged workers on to new steps.

Who was there to liquidate all these problems and difficulties? The Government had been discredited by the peace. With the failures it was receiving abroad, it commanded no respect at home, and lacked both an inspiration to revive the national spirit, and a lever to start the country on a new career of work and economic restoration. Besides, it lacked a man with eyesight for the truth; a man to understand that the people were not as revolutionary as they seemed, and that the march to anarchy could be arrested by a strong use of constituted authority, and an enlightened effort at reforming popular wrongs. To Orlando there had succeeded Francesco Nitti, a talented Southerner, noted for his distinguished studies in economics and finance, but disastrously out of place as a premier. For he not only belonged to the school of Giolitti in politics, but had unfortunately a temperament exactly fitted to bring out the worst in the Giolittian philosophy. By nature not endowed with much capacity for faith, the struggles of a

hard youth had left him with incurably small confidence and a sense of almost exasperated pessimism. He saw little hope in Italy, and still less hope in Italians; and when confronted with the premises of a national syllogism, drew almost inevitably a tragic conclusion. In this there was not (as his enemies tried to say) only weakness and cynicism. It was perhaps chiefly that his mind lacked the strength necessary to impose accuracy on his vision; and that his disillusionment, left supreme by this weakness, made him aware always of the worst aspects of reality. Unfortunately, too, he was susceptible to the influence of threatening facts—and when confronted by the rebukes of Allied Powers, the defiance of D'Annunzio, the menace of the Socialists, and the mutterings of popular unrest, capitulated to forces he knew himself inadequate to check or bring under control. His resources as a politician were, in fact, only those needed to manage Parliament—those, and no more; and if Parliament had not been still the Parliament which had passed through the ordeal of Caporetto, maintained resistance for three years, and faced shattering crises of victory and defeat, perhaps they would not have been equal even for that. But—and it was the fundamental disaster of the time—the Deputies and the governing class as a whole were profoundly and incredibly tired. The sense of impending dissolution that seemed to undermine all developments in national life; the increasing tide of violence, impatience, and reproach; the confusion of ideas and principles and parties; the ineffectiveness of discussion, and the breaking down of purpose—all these were things that put an intolerable strain on weary minds, and gave to events an irresistible and ever-accelerating rhythm of their own.

Indeed, with the Nitti régime, a new and fatal phase began in the generation of disorder. He did not (as we have said) understand the real phenomenon of the time—did not see that the Socialist leaders were ineffective men, incapable of actuating the revolution they threatened, even though circumstances put the instruments of power in their hands. He mistook their “sound and fury” for potential force, and thought the rule of the masses something so formidably near that it must be staved off by repeated and even desperate concessions. So he initiated

a policy of purchasing Socialist complaisance at any price—and when he had stripped the Government one by one of its name, its prestige and authority, ended by purchasing his own ruin and the dissolution of the State.

He made at first one decisive gesture by firmly settling an “international” strike that had broken out in July. But having done this, he made no further effort to diminish unrest. Disturbances of all kinds were allowed to upset everyday routine, and clashes between strikers and volunteer organizations to reach a point where they seemed inseparable from the normal functioning of industrial life. Strikes, moreover, multiplied with a speed that paralysed trade and infected the public services with a wish to try what they too might gain from obstruction. Where the workers had begun by asking simply an increase in their wages, they went on to attempt almost the imposition of their caprice on employers; and just at this time, when the country seemed most disorientated, the Government decided to introduce the principle of proportional representation. It was a deadly mistake. With elections fairly held on the old system, with the extreme Socialists prevented from using violence at the polls, with the electors honestly approached—everything in November 1919 might have changed. For the Italy that had issued from the war had gained immensely in moral strength, in collective consciousness, and in sense of social co-operation. The experience of Caporetto had involved a conquest of self, and the conquest of self had led to Vittorio Veneto. Now at last, after so many decades of suffering and disunion, not only “Italy” had been “made” but “Italians”; and the new Italians, who had responded to the appeals of D’Annunzio, who had sent Orlando back to the Peace Conference with their shouts of support in his ears, would not have abandoned their Government—if their Government had not first abandoned them. But in point of fact the measure for proportional representation was an extremist measure, extracted from Nitti by the Socialists, and the new “Popolari,” who knew that it would favour the special form of their organization. It resulted (applied to the accompaniment of coercion) in a gain to the Socialists of 156 seats, and to the Popolari of 107. And the Socialists left the nation in no doubt as to their ideas.

At the opening of Parliament, when the King entered the hall, they left it singing the Red Flag.

There was no reaction against them. The Camera, so elected, had no real vitality, no positive ideas, no energy for collective initiative. Besides it, too, lacked a leader. The old neutralists could not forgive Salandra because he had brought about intervention, and apart from this still cherished an affection for Giolitti. . . . Orlando was under the cloud of Paris; Don Sturzo, the Sicilian priest and organizer of the Popolari, was mistrusted for his ambition and the shadow of his clerical support. . . . There remained only the moderate Socialists. But these had been thrust aside by their own colleagues, and were in any case summed up in the personality of Turati, old, well-meaning, and honest, but entirely deficient in practical sense. All these elements were, moreover, consciously or unconsciously, waiting on events—on the intrigues of the Catholic Popolari, on the rising tide of Socialist confusion, on the results which perhaps it would bring forth. Within a few days of beginning work, they were invited by Nitti to recognize the peasants' seizure of land by passing a measure declaring its socialization; and they passed it, blindly, wearily, without adequate opposition. Following on this there was a postal strike, a railway strike, a strike in the cotton mills of Piedmont, and another railway strike in sympathy with the cotton strike. And the Government not only abstained from disapproval; it issued a decree conferring something like legal sanction of the activities of the cotton workers. Was there any further dignity left for it to renounce? It appeared that there was. The Socialists had long carried on a campaign of censure against the Army and expressed their disapproval of that part of the population which had taken part in a "capitalist war." To satisfy their feelings and avoid unnecessary friction, the Government recommended officers to wear mufti when not on duty; and a decree was passed granting an amnesty to deserters. It was a decree that, passed in other circumstances and expressed in a different way, might have been simply an act of humanity; but the official measure was expressed in an unnecessarily offensive form, and erected desertion into something like merit. Finally, what it lacked in implication was

made up in the practical action taken by the railway and train employees, who stopped trains and trams on which soldiers, officers, or police were detected to be travelling—and that with neither rebuke nor punishment for their action. Perhaps, indeed, the Government did not quite realize the insulting quality of these things. For the Premier himself did not dare to travel by train. When he went to meet the heads of the Allied Governments at San Remo, he used the route by sea. . . .

And meanwhile the Cabinet was passing through a series of crises, and was day by day losing the last semblance of support. In its year of office nothing had been accomplished. The deficit in the Budget had not been settled; the Adriatic dispute had not been adjusted; the State had not asserted its authority, and public order had not been maintained. "With a head of the Government like Signor Nitti," wrote the *Giornale d'Italia* in a bitter article of May 1921, "we are proceeding towards a debacle. One does not save the State by means of a series of renunciations, of abdications, and of weaknesses . . . one disintegrates it. . . . The country is not given stability, but is corrupted; Parliament is not raised, but humiliated. . . . 'Après moi, le déluge,' thinks Signor Nitti, but we hope that Italians think nothing of the kind." In reality, however, worse was to follow Nitti than the deluge; there was to follow the honourable Giolitti.

It was the surest proof of the stage of dissolution that had been reached. For the old man could give the country nothing but the rags of his pre-war experience and the residue of principles long worn out. Moreover, he also understood nothing of the new Italy which had arisen, or the new morale it had achieved. Ridden by his memories, he harked back in his mind to the days of Zanardelli and the strikes of 1901, when his *laissez-faire* policy had seemed to prevent reaction and revolution; and he imagined the situation in 1921 could be dealt with by exactly the same methods. The Government, he thought, should remain neutral in the "struggle between capital and labour," and let both sides wear themselves out. The big industrialists might profitably learn that they depended on his Government's protection, and that to obtain his protection

they must be a little more yielding in the matter of taxation and social reform. Socialists, on their side, might learn that it was one thing to have control of the means of production, and quite another to make them function. Accordingly, when six hundred thousand workers occupied the chief factories in Lombardy and Piedmont, when the factories were organized defensively, and Red Guards and Revolutionary Tribunals established—he did nothing. He waited for the strike to break down; and when after a week the workers had to abandon a position their leaders did not know how to exploit, he saw to it that they obtained most exceptionally advantageous terms. “The Socialists,” he remarked with quiet satisfaction, “have lost their illusions.”

It was a debatable point. And, in any case, it left out of account the feelings of the country as a whole. While perhaps the episode had demonstrated that the peril of a Bolshevik revolution was past, it had shown constituted authority deliberately abdicating before the use of extra-legal force; and with that abdication, constituted authority had lost its place in national life. It was not only that people no longer trusted their Government or believed in its power to rule; it was that they felt an indescribable sense of exasperation and impatience towards it, and with this, a conviction that if they did not help themselves, no help would be forthcoming at all. The very supporters of Socialism began to weaken in allegiance—the moderates because they were alienated by the excesses of the last two years, and the masses because they saw that the extremists had been tried and found wanting, and that the talk of a revolution was, after all, only talk.

The situation in Parliament, however, did not show these tendencies. The Socialists decided to resist Giolitti's measures, and came to an open break with the Premier over the question of the bread subsidy. It was a measure no longer required by circumstances, an unjustified burden on the Treasury that Giolitti meant to suppress. He had, indeed, already done much to restore finance and bring the Budget back to equilibrium; and he had no intention of tolerating unnecessary expenditure merely to please the “piazza.” Besides, he did not seriously expect Socialist opposition; and when their obstruction tactics

began, let fall a most significant remark—"And I *let them occupy the factories!*" It was a remark that summed up all his methods of government—all his methods and his convictions.

In accordance with those he looked now for a force to oppose and balance those Socialists who would not, so unreasonably, adhere to the rules of his system. And he found the force he needed (or thought he had found it) in a party outside Parliament—a party that had been creating a great deal of noise and agitation in the north—the "fascisti." They would, according to his ideas, dispose of the Socialists; and when they had disposed of the Socialists, he would in turn dispose of them. He began a dual policy of "giving the fascisti support in deed, and denying it in word; of giving the Socialists support in word, and denying it in deed." The "fascisti" (in spite of constitutional and penal laws prohibiting it) were allowed to follow the Socialist example and arm themselves at will and with impunity; they were allowed to increase their almost military organization; they were allowed to act as the arbiters of local disputes; and—gradually, almost unnoticeably, they were allowed to conquer public opinion, and establish themselves in its eyes as the real defenders of the national ideal, the champions of order and security. "It was the negative activity of a Government rapidly falling to pieces rather than the attraction of Fascist principles that drove people into the arms of the Fascists, on condition that they would rescue them from the nightmare of confusion. . . ."

But these were things that Giolitti had not expected, and which he did not now realize. No one in Parliament took "fascismo" seriously. Contemplating the flow of its appeals, the violence and excess of its actions, above all, the inconsistencies in its ideas, they could not imagine that here was a movement ready to capture the State. Everything they knew about it seemed to indicate a mushroom growth. It had begun in a small way at Milan in March 1919, when Mussolini had founded the "fasci di combattimento"—an organization which in these early stages had the character mainly of a league of ex-service men determined vaguely to reform political life. They had upheld at the beginning a strongly radical pro-

gramme (including the abolition of the Senate, the granting of votes to women, and the handing over of industrial management to workers' organizations), and at the General Elections of 1919 had been unable to gain even a seat, Mussolini himself being heavily defeated. During the next year, too, its programme had seemed rather to be in competition with the Socialists than in contrast with them, and it was only as the initial group amalgamated with others and widened its base, attracting new classes and influences, that its ideas underwent a fundamental change. It was the occupation of the factories that had given it its great impetus. In May 1920 the total number of Fascists was 30,000; by February 1921 it was 100,000; and by October 1922 it was over 300,000. Its spread was helped by its violent methods, by its unscrupulous use of force and intimidation against opponents, and by that very flexibility of ideas which made it the object of condescending amusement in Rome. "Does it know if it's going Right or Left?" said someone carelessly, and Mussolini himself remarked that "the fascisti are the gypsies of Italian politics; not being tied down to any fixed principles, they proceed unceasingly toward one goal, the future well-being of the Italian people." It was a doctrine anyone could accept; and its attraction was even capable of elaboration: "We have no fixed principles (*pregiudiziali*) and we have none because we are no church; we are a movement. We are not a party, we are an athletic body of men." Indeed, the two great pillars of Fascism (in so far as it could be said to have any pillars) seemed to be elasticity and a quite inspiring emphasis on national sentiment. Here, at last, it seemed, was an outlet for that tide of patriotic feeling and that sentiment of collective consciousness which the nation had achieved in the three years' resistance of the War.

In the General Election of 1921 Mussolini himself and thirty-seven other members of the movement were returned, and cautiously trying a coalition with the Nationalist Party, began to play a prominent part in Parliament. It was not at all what Giolitti had intended. He found the situation getting beyond his control. Vigorously criticized for his share in the Treaty of Rapallo, he reverted to his old device—he fled from power

with the intention of returning to it later. But once he was gone and his personal ascendancy and genius for parliamentary strategy removed, the end was in sight. He was followed in the premiership by Bonomi, a well-intentioned but vacillating Reformist-Socialist, soon overthrown by the subterranean intrigues of the democrat factions and by a grave economic difficulty among the banks. After Bonomi there followed a crisis, during which Giolitti tried to return, and Don Sturzo and his "Popolari" applied their veto against him. There followed finally, since neither would give way, the premiership of Facta, a pleasant, kindly old man, as politically neutral as he was genial and humane. And precisely Facta, already helpless before the accumulated violence of Socialists and "fascisti," was called on to meet a general strike. On the 1st August, 1922, the great event was proclaimed; and on the 2nd August it was already seen to have failed. The trains, the trams, the public services of every kind, were functioning as if nothing had happened—and they were functioning because the "fascisti" had assumed control. The mobilization of their forces was already beginning, and the main question of the hour was simply, "What would be the attitude of the South?" The North had already given its consent at Cremona and at the other great rallies; and the South, hesitant in decision, conservative and reactionary by character, did not, at the Congress of Naples, oppose the movement. There remained the gesture of the march on Rome. The Facta Government, at last awaking to a sense of reality, invited the King to sign a decree proclaiming a state of siege; but the King refused to initiate civil war; and on 22nd October the fascisti entered Rome. After this the royal telegram to Mussolini was only a formality. There was no one else to take power, and leaving Milan, the new Premier uttered a memorable phrase: "To-morrow Italy will not have a Ministry, but a Government."

What *kind* of Government? No one knew; neither the King, nor the Parliament, nor the people, nor even Mussolini himself. He had promised them that he would give "cohesion, authority, and prestige to the State," and to men weary of chaos, that formula seemed enough.

NOTES

PROLOGUE

1. A. Oriani, *La lotta politica in Italia* (III edizione, 1925), vol. iii, p. 111. Cf. also L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 80, and J. A. R. Marriott, *Makers of Italy*, chapters on United Italy.
Cf. also G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. i, p. 28: "La rivoluzione del '60 (non) è tanto remota nel passato da nasconderci . . . che essa fu opera di una esigua minoranza, eroica e fortunata, la quale trascino la grande maggioranza, o inerte o restia o contraria. . . ." Don Sturzo, *Italy and Fascismo*, p. 15: "In reality it was still an élite of moderate Liberal intellectuals, who, having improvised the Italian nation, took on themselves the burden of creating the Italian State."
2. For the romantic version of the Risorgimento, cf. for instance Carducci's poem to Mazzini:
"Egli vide nel ciel crepuscolare
Col cuor di Gracco ed il pensier di Dante
La terza Italia; e con le luci fise
A lei trasse per mezzo, un cimitero,
E un popol morto dietro a lui si mise."
3. G. Salvemini, *L'Italia nel secolo XIX* (in *L'Europa nel secolo XIX*, vol. i, Padova, 1925), pp. 373-74. Cf. also N. Rodolico, *Il Popolo agli inizi del risorgimento nell'Italia meridionale* (Firenze, 1925).
4. A. Oriani, op. cit., p. 146.
5. Cf. Achille Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana*, vol. ii, p. 7: "Finite le lotte della sua ricostituzione politica, vinti alla meglio gli imbarazzi maggiori . . . l'Italia parve rimanere incerta intorno all'obbietto cui rivolgere la sua attività."
6. On the ill-feeling between Sicily and Naples compare especially Bolton King, *History of Italian Unity*, vol. i, pp. 94-96. On the survival of the same tendency even after union, see G. Fortunato, *Pagine e ricordi parlamentari*, vol. ii, p. 51. As late as 1890, when Fortunato asked a group of Southern peasants if it would not displease them to see Italy defeated and France victorious, he received the following reply: "L'Italia è il Piemonte; noi Napoli: si quaggiù verranno i francesi, sarà lo stesso; al più muteremo il principe Doria, e voi, con altri signori come lui e voi" (!)
7. Bolton King, op. cit., vol. i, p. 75.
8. Bowring Report, p. 11.
9. Bolton King, op. cit., vol. i, p. 96.
10. Cf. P. Turiello, *Governo e governati in Italia* (edition Fatti, Bologna, 1889), p. 11; also G. Volpe, *L'Italia in cammino* (Milan, 1931), p. 9. Cf. Balbo, *Sommario della storia d'Italia*: "Si brancolava fra le varie

forme di libertà e si invocava costituzione spagnuola o francese o inglese o repubblica a modo americano o del Medio Evo o antico greco-romano. Era un caos di brame incomposte, come succede fra ineducati ed inesperti, che non hanno a decidersi nè scienza nè esperienza."

11. G. Volpe (*L'Italia in cammino*, pp. 53-54) tends to minimize the importance of these differences, but his view is exceptional.
12. G. Volpe, op. cit., p. 59. Cf. also the ideas of F. de Sanctis as quoted in G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. i, p. 120; and the views of S. Jacini, excellently explained by E. Tagliacozzo in his *Voci di realismo politico dopo il 1870*, p. 30.
13. Bolton King, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 304.
14. A good description of the sulphur mines is in Beauclerk's *Rural Italy*, pp. 19-20. For a later description, see *Nuova Antologia*, 1894.
15. Bolton King, op. cit., vol. i, p. 39.
16. Cf. one of Cavour's favourite sayings: "Armonizzare il nord col sud della penisola, è impresa più difficile che aver da fare con l'Austria e con la chiesa."
17. Cf. the view of A. Oriani, op. cit., p. 114.
18. Bolton King, op. cit., pp. 91 et seq. P. Villari, *Lettere meridionale*, passim.
19. Cf. the title of the book by A. Quilici, *L'insufficienza della borghesia italiana*.
20. A. Lion, *The Pedigree of Fascism*, p. 12. P. Turiello, *Governo e governati in Italia—Saggi*, p. 12. For the suspicion which the élite felt towards the passivists, see S. Jacini, *L'Evoluzione dei partiti politici in Italia*.
21. This mistake on the part of the Liberals was not perhaps peculiar to Italy. Cf. H. Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 258: "As it [Liberalism] achieved its emancipation, it forgot not less completely than its predecessors that the claims of social justice were not exhausted by its victory . . ."
22. G. de Ruggiero, *History of European Liberalism*, p. 313 et seq. Cf. also C. Cattaneo, *Opere*, vols. i-vi. The main idea of the "Radical Liberals" of the Risorgimento are summarized in L. Salvatorelli, *Il pensiero politico italiano del 1700 al 1870*, pp. 327-54.
23. L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 60.
24. L. Villari, op. cit. Cf. also the view quoted by Petrucci della Gattina in his *Storia d'Italia dal 1866 al 1880*, p. 154.
25. "Conosceva a fondo il Piemonte, un poco l'Italia, quasi niente l'Europa." P. della Gattina, op. cit., pp. 149 et seq.
26. F. A. Ogg, *Governments of Modern Europe* (revised edition, 1928), pp. 517-18. Lowell, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, vol. i, p. 813.

For the contrast between the strict letter of the Statute and the way in which the Government of Italy actually developed, see G. Mosca, *Sulla teoria dei governi e governo parlamentare* (second edition,

1925), p. 155: "Lo Statuto fondamentale del Regno *non* è come il codice una norme fissa ed impreteribile, la quale nella sua applicazione pratica trova una fedele interpretazione non solo formale ma anche sostanziale: al contrario, se, nelle apparenze e nelle forme legali, si sta scrupolosamente alla sua lettera, in tutto ciò che riguarda la verace distribuzione del poteri dello Stato questa non è punto osservata."

On the adaptability of the Statute, cf. also a letter from Crispi to F. Lampertico, 21st September, 1881: "Io non credo alla immutabilità dello Statuto. Lo Statuto è un limite perché non si ritorni indietro e non già perché non si proceda innanzi." Quoted from *F. Crispi—Politica interna*, ed. Palamenghi-Crispi, p. 202.

27. Cf. Palamenghi-Crispi's view in *F. Crispi—Politica interna*, ch. v, pp. 153-54.

28. Don Sturzo, *Italy and Fascismo*, pp. 13, 20-21.

29. Francesco Nitti, *Nord e Sud*, *passim*.

30. For a good analysis of the Italian attitude to the monarchy, see R. Michels, *Italien von Heute*, Chapter II: "Die schwache Monarchie und der absterbende republikanische Gedanke," pp. 28-36. Cf. especially: "Die Ursache dieser Erscheinung ist darin zu suchen, dass der Italiener im allgemeinen, und ganz besonders in weltlichen, politischen Dingen, mit dem Autoritätsbegriff, so wie er sich in den nördlicheren Ländern herausgebildet hat, damals nicht anzufangen wusste . . . der Monarchismus in der Gestalt, in welcher er in anderen Ländern aufgetreten ist (war dem Italiener) fremd geblieben. Es ist nicht zutreffend, dass . . . der Italiener keine Autorität anerkenne. Der Gelernte . . . der Künstler . . . der Politiker . . . erobert sich im Herzen der Italienischen Volkes schneller ein Ehrenplatz als in Deutschland oder selbst in Frankreich. Aber der Begriff der erblichen Autorität, die nicht auf dem Gebiete eigenen Schaffens, sondern auf dem Wege der automatisch weitergeleiteten Überlieferung entsteht, fehlt ihm. . . ." The same refusal to render homage to form without substance occurs persistently in Italian history.

On the monarchy itself at this time, see G. Massari, *La vita e il regno di Vittorio Emanuele*.

31. Quoted also by B. Croce in his *History of Italy*, p. 108. The succeeding verses are of even greater bitterness. For the general point of view they represent, see other poems in Carducci's *Giambi ed Epodi*, especially that written in honour of Vincenzo Caldesi.

"Dormi, avvolto nel tuo mantel di gloria
Dormi, Vincenzo mio:
De'subdoli e de'fiacchi oggi è l'istoria
E dei forti l'oblio.

Deli non conturbi te questo ronzare
Di Menzogne e di vantì!

No, gridar non vorrei di Roma il nome
Su la tua sacra tomba."

32. For the effect of Mentana on the public, cf. *La Revue Contemporaine*: "L'antagonismo più violento si manifestò tra lo spirito patriottico degl'italiani ed il governo di Vittorio Emanuele. . . . Chiuso nel Palazzo Pitti, il re d'Italia udiva il minaccioso rumore della sommossa, e per la prima volta non si trovò difeso abbastanza dall'amore del popolo. . . . Le idee repubblicane si fanno via anche in Italia." Quoted from the Italian translation of P. della Gattina, op. cit.
33. The same point is made in H. Finer, *The Italy of Mussolini*, pp. 64-65.
34. Cf. an anecdote narrated by G. Fortunato in his *Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. ii, p. 180.
35. Cf. L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 80, and G. Volpe, *L'Italia in cammino*, pp. 30 et seq. Cf. also S. Jacini's preface to the great *L'Inchiesta Agraria* (15 vols.).
36. Bolton King, op. cit., vol. ii.
37. Bolton King, op. cit., p. 301. Maestri, *L'Italia*, p. 255.
38. F. de Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. ii, pp. 423-24.

CHAPTER I

1. F. A. Ogg, *The Governments of Europe* (rev. ed. 1928), p. 521. Dupriez, *Les Ministres*, vol. i, pp. 292-97. The text is in A. L. Lowell's *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, vol. ii, pp. 346-54. Cf. also Racioppi and Brunelli, *Commento allo statuto del regno*, 3 vols. (Turin, 1909). A good German authority is E. Brusa, *Das Staatsrecht des Königsreichs Italien* (Leipzig, 1892) in Marquardsen's *Handbuch*.
Changes in the Constitution are discussed by G. A. Ruiz in *Amendments to the Italian Constitution* in annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, September 1895, No. 38. A useful general account is in F. R. Dareste, *Les Constitutions Modernes* (Paris, 1883), vol. i.
2. Cf. the unfavourable view of Petruccelli della Gattina, *Storia d'Italia dal 1866 al 1880*, p. 346: "Una camera di deputati invalidi e vecchi, stanchi, disingannati, pigri . . ." For a (partisan) defence of the Senate, see *Nuova Antologia*, 16th February, 1937. (Article by A. Alberti.)
3. Dupriez, *Les Ministres*, vol. i, p. 313.
4. Lowell, op. cit., p. 156. Brusa, op. cit., p. 155-56. P. della Gattina, *ibid.*, p. 420-21.
5. F. A. Ogg, *The Governments of Europe* (rev. ed. 1928), p. 527.
6. Cf. D. Sturzo, *Italy and Fascismo*, p. 66.
7. Ogg, op. cit., p. 526. For detailed analysis and criticism of the Senate, see Temperley, *Senates and Upper Chambers*. On the move-

- ment to reform it, see Report of the Commission, "Per la riforma del senato, relazione della Commissione" (Roma, 1911). Also an article by Nazzareno, "La riforma del senato," in *Rivista di diritto pubblico*, vol. iii, p. 171.
8. Lowell, op. cit., p. 159. Brusa, op. cit., p. 139.
 9. P. Turiello, *Governi e governati in Italia* (ed. Fatti, Bologna, 1889), p. 327.
 10. Cf. R. Bonfadini, "I partiti parlamentari" in *Nuova Antologia* (1894), pp. 627 et seq.
 11. S. Jacini, *I conservatori e l'evoluzione naturale dei partiti politici in Italia* (1879), p. 60.
 12. There is a vast literature on the confusion which this habit of compromise produced in the political parties, Cf. for instance a speech by G. Parenzo in the Camera (Atti parlamentari, Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 15 aprile, 1874). Cf. also a speech by F. Crispi in his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. II, pp. 188 et seq. On the same theme, G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. I.
 13. Cf. the view of G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno di Italia*, p. 264.
 14. B. Croce (*History of Italy*, p. 71) is against this view, but he is almost alone among Italian historians in disagreeing with it. Bolton King (*History of Italian Unity*, vol. II, pp. 308-9) accepts the traditional attitude.
 15. The formula "Non eletti nè elettori" was invented by Don Margotti, editor of *L'Unità cattolica*.
 16. Cf. G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale*, p. 264.
 17. Cf. G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. I, p. 120.
 18. Cf. Lowell, *Government and Parties in Continental Europe*, vol. I, p. 192.
 19. Scipio Sighele, *Pagine nazionaliste* (Milan, 1910), pp. 5-6.
 20. A typical grievance was that the North had unfairly purged the Southern bureaucracy of its native elements in order to replace them with its own countrymen. The North, on its side, complained that the South was not contributing to the State in proportion to the benefits it was receiving. Cf. F. Nitti, *Nord e Sud*, passim. (Nitti's statistics and arguments are not always quite sound. They should be checked by reference to G. Carano-Donvito, *L'Economia meridionale prima e dopo il Risorgimento* (1928).)
 21. P. Turiello, op. cit., p. 327.
 22. A. Oriani, *La lotta politica in Italia*, pp. 122-23.
 23. The Tuscans denied that this was their reason for voting against the Right, but it was the view taken by their contemporaries and accepted by later Italian historians. Cf. Oriani, op. cit., p. 379. Also G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 292; A. Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana*, vol. II, p. 27. Ch. Seignobos, *Histoire de l'Europe Contemporaine; évolution des partis et des formes politiques*, 1814-1911, p. 452.

24. S. Jacini, *I conservatori e l'evoluzione naturale dei partiti politici in Italia*, p. 74. Cf. also L. Villari, *Italy*, pp. 87-88.

It would be interesting to compare how far France has overcome similar difficulties in her Constitution. A brief but suggestive sketch is in *Post-War France* by P. Vaucher, Chapters I and II.

25. Cf. Bolton King, *History of Italian Unity*, vol. ii, p. 303. Also P. Fischer, *L'Italia e gli italiani* (Terza edizione tradotta, Firenze, 1904), p. 183. The frequent changes in the Ministry for Finance are partly explained by the fact that during one period there were two ministers in this department, one for Finance, the other for the Treasury.
26. P. Fischer, op. cit., p. 108. Cf. also P. Orsi, *L'Italia moderna* (fifth edition, Milan, 1925), who says that out of the total population 550,000 only were electors. S. Jacini, *Sulle condizioni dell'Italia dopo 1866*, p. 16, gives again a different estimate—population 25,527,000; electors 504,263; or about twenty out of every 1,000. For the decline in the quality of the deputies (due to the spread of the clique system, etc.), see R. Bonghi, *Come cadde la destra*, ch. ii.
27. S. Jacini, op. cit., Bolton King, *History of Italian Unity*, vol. ii, p. 307. The franchise was in the main that of the Piedmontese Electoral Law of 1848, which gave the vote to all (except the illiterate) who paid forty lire in direct taxation. For the times this was quite a large amount.
28. S. Jacini, op. cit., pp. 16 et seq.
29. Cf. G. Salvemini, "L'Italia politica nel secolo xix" (in *L'Europa nel secolo xix*, vol. i, Padova, 1925), pp. 373 et seq.: "Nelle condizioni dell'Italia fra il 1860 ed il 1870, la grande maggioranza dei contadini abbandonata a sè nelle amministrazioni locali autonome, e fornita dello strumento del suffragio universale per conquistarle, avrebbe in poco tempo, data la prevalenza alla minoranza reazionaria . . ." "Perciò i democratici nei loro programmi mettevano la formula del suffragio universale, ma non mettevano nessuna passione per ottenere che questa formula fosse attuata; la ripetevano per tradizione, ma senza convinzione e senza slancio."
30. An excellent impression of this social backwardness is given by P. Villari's book on conditions in the South, *Lettere meridionale*. Cf. also a popular but interesting work by F. Garlanda, *La Terza Italia* (Rome, 1900-2). A short but illuminating description of a candidate's experience in his constituency is that by F. de Sanctis, *Viaggio elettorale* (Naples, 1876).
31. Cf. the words of Dina: "What is the paramount question among us, which may prove the source of fierce . . . divisions? The great question which eclipses all others is the question of finance. All the chief problems—credit, currency, the army, national defence, political institutions, economic development—are bound up with it." (Quoted from B. Croce, *History of Italy*, p. 46.)
32. Cf. B. Croce, op. cit., p. 5. Also G. Giolitti, *Memoirs*, p. 46; G.

Massari, *Homini della destra*. A defence of the Right's policy by one of its most able and brilliant minds is *La politica della destra*, by Silvio Spaventa.

33. L. Villari, op. cit., p. 85. On the immobility of the Right, cf. Petruccelli della Gattina, *Storia d'Italia dal 1866 al 1880*, pp. 133, 134.
34. On Sella see the excellent book by A. Guiccoli, *Sella*. Cf. also della Gattina, op. cit., pp. 157-59; or G. Giolitti, *Memoirs*, p. 37. Also L. Luzzatti, *Opere*: vol. i, *Grandi italiani—Grandi sacrifici per la patria*.
35. Cf. Oriani, *ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 248. Also P. della Gattina, op. cit., pp. 167-77 (a particularly good portrait). A useful article is that by Ruggero Bonghi, "Marco Minghetti" in *Nuova Antologia*, 16th December, 1886. For an unfavourable estimate, see Bolton King, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 249-50.
36. For Lanza's life and character, see especially E. Tavallini, *La vita ed i tempi de G. Lanza*, vols. i, ii. Cf. also S. Cilibrizzi, *Storia parlamentare, politica e diplomatica d'Italia*, vol. ii, p. 60.
P. della Gattina, op. cit., pp. 155 et seq., describes Lanza as a "gendarme . . . a mediocre man with little political tact . . ."
37. G. Giolitti, *Memoirs*, p. 47.
38. The phrase is G. Fortunato's (*Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. i, p. 273): "Noi italiani siamo certamente i più tassati fra tutti i popoli d'Europa, perchè l'unità della patria—bene supremo e inestimabile—ci è costata più danaro che sangue . . ." He supports the former view (regarding taxation) with statistics.
39. Bolton King, *History of Italian Unity*, vol. ii, p. 313. It should be added that the economic difficulties of the day did not only concern the Budget. *Rentes* had fallen to 62. (A. Solmi, *The Making of Italy*, p. 136.)
40. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 61.
41. Cf. P. D. Fisher, *L'Italia e gli italiani* (third edition, Italian translation, 1904), pp. 187 et seq. W. J. Stillman (*The Union of Italy*, p. 368) says that "in point of fact it was so widespread and so evenly laid on that perhaps no tax ever oppressed the lower classes less . . ." It should be added that the weight of informed opinion is against Stillman.
42. For a useful short account of this episode, see S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 54.
43. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 5 maggio, 1873 (especially Cairoli's speech).
44. Cf. *Opere di L. Luzzatti*, vol. i, p. 21: ". . . metodi un po' diversi e più umani."
45. Cf. his election slogan, "non una spesa nuova, senza una nuova entrata." Cf. also his speech to Parliament in January 1875 (*Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vi, p. 341).
46. Cf. G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 278.
47. M. Minghetti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vii, pp. 145 et seq.

48. Cf. the comment of B. Croce, *op. cit.*, p. 47: ". . . The members of the Government were not the only heroes; for ten years the whole Italian people took upon themselves greater burdens than perhaps any nation has ever borne, and became the most heavily taxed people in Europe . . ."
49. Cf. on this point especially the views of such a financial expert as A. Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana* (Turin, 1902), pp. 18 et seq. He expressed his views as early as 1876 in a speech to the Camera: "La massa attuale delle nostre imposte . . . non è una sistema; è un agglomerazione di tante cose diverse, riunite dal caso più che da altro; è una serie di strati geologici, che il tempo ha sovrapposto gli uni agli altri, senza che vi abbia fra di essi alcuna connessione logica, alcuna armonia, senza che abbiamo una base uniforme, razionale. Noi troviamo nel nostro sistema tributario le specie d'imposta le più disparate . . . mentre vi hanno qua duplicazioni ingiustissime, aggravii insopportabili, troviamo là che importanti ricchezze sfuggono impunemente ai pubblici tributi . . ." For another excellent analysis of the financial system, see P. D. Fischer, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 et seq.
50. F. Garlanda, *La terza Italia*, p. 32, gives a vivid if general account of the evils of the taxation system. Cf. also S. Jacini, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1. An interesting criticism of the system in its later developments is in Bolton King's *Italy of To-day* (London, 1901). Cf. also P. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
51. Cf. on this point a letter by the French Ambassador, Rothan (March 1871): "Nous n'avons pas fait assez, disent les Italiens, pour nous assurer la reconnaissance de la France, et nous avons trop fait pour ne pas encourir les ressentiments de la Prusse. Il n'est que temps d'aviser." (Quoted from L. Chiala, *Pagine di storia contemporanea*, vol. 1: *Dal convegno di Plombières al Congresso di Berlino*, pp. 99-100.)
52. The phrase is quoted from Chiala, *op. cit.*, vol. i.
53. Especially after the rise to the presidency of Thiers, whose attitude to the kingdom of Italy was one of grudging tolerance, and who considered the Pope's temporal power "Come necessario all'indipendenza della Santa Sede." See L. Chiala, *op. cit.*, p. 96. Or Jules Favre, *L'Allemagne et l'Italie*, p. 71.
54. L. Chiala, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-15, has an interesting collection of quotations on these events. Cf. especially a speech by the Bishop of Orleans, with its studied rudeness towards the Italian Royal House.
55. Speech by P. Mancini, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 18 marzo, 1873.
56. Dina's words are in *Carteggio politico di M. A. Castelli*, vol. ii, p. 560. Two interesting articles showing Italian feeling at this time are those by R. Bonghi in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st July and 31st August, 1873-1st September, 1873.
57. Luigi Federzoni, *Paradossi ieri* (Milan, 1925), pp. 12 et seq.
58. "Sospettati a Berlino, disprezzati a Parigi, maltrattati ovunque,

questo è l'amaro frutto che gl' italiani ritraggono dalla politica incerta del loro governo . . ."

59. A useful article on the Right's foreign policy is that by G. Salvemini, "La politica estera della destra dopo il 1870" (in the Roman periodical, *L'azione*, 31d December, 1923).
60. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 14 maggio, 1872.
61. Ibid. Tornata del 25 novembre, 1872. (Debate on the Budget for Foreign Affairs.) Speech by Miceli . . . "tutta la politica del Gabinetto non è che una successione di vigliaccherie e di umiliazione."
62. Ibid., 20th February, 1875. Debate on Foreign Affairs. Miceli's accusation of "soverchia tenerezza verso la Francia."
63. L. Chiala, op. cit., vol. i, p. 188, on the points of disagreement between Bismarck and the Italian ministers.
64. Cf. the German Emperor's parting words to Vittorio-Emanuele. (Quoted in A. Singer, *Histoire de la Triple Alliance*, French translation, p. 34.)
65. See L. Chiala, op. cit., vol. i, p. 174. For the effect of the speech on Italian opinion, see an article by Bonghi in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st February, 1874.
66. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 23 aprile, 1879. Speech by P. della Gattina. Cf. also op. cit., Sessione del 1878-79, Tornata del 30 gennaio: "The last Minister of the Right had left us in an excellent position as far as our relations abroad were concerned . . ."
67. An excellent account of the Right's policy towards the Church is in Mario Falco, *La politica ecclesiastica della Destra*. Cf. his conclusions, pp. 34-35.
68. For a detailed account, see A. Jemolo, *La questione della proprietà ecclesiastica nel regno di Sardegna e nel regno d'Italia durante 1848-88*. Cf. also Boncompagni, *La chiesa e lo stato in Italia*.
69. Cf. especially *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 6 maggio, 1873. Debate on the abolition of the religious corporations.
70. For di Césaro's speech, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 25 novembre, 1872.
71. For a discussion of this Bill, see *Atti parlamentari*. Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 25 aprile, 1872.
72. *Atti parlamentari*. Camera dei Deputati. Discussioni. Tornata del 3 maggio, 1875, p. 2862.
73. Quoted from B. Croce, *History of Italy*, p. 116.
74. Silvio Spaventa, *La politica della Destra*, p. 34.
75. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 20 gennaio, 1874. (Debate on education.)
76. Martial law had been applied three times—in 1862, in 1863, and 1866. For Crispi's speech, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, p. 241. The general debate is in *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera

- dei Deputati. Tornata del 5 giugno, 1875. Cf. especially 11th and 12th June for Taiani's speeches.
77. For Lanza's defence, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 25 novembre, 1872, p. 3598.
 78. For a brief account of this episode, see S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 76.
 79. Cf. Silvio Spaventa's analysis of the mistakes made by the Right, *La politica della Destra*, pp. 39-40. For the Right's tendency to "remain immobile in contemplation of its own ideas," see G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, p. 173. A useful description of the Right and the reasons of its fall are in R. Bonghi, *Come cadde la Destra*.
 80. For an analysis of this state of feeling, see S. Jacini, op. cit., pp. 81-2.
 81. Cf. G. Giolitti, *Memoirs*, p. 50: "During the period of opposition it (the popularity of the Left) was due to an infallible maxim: oppose new taxes and demand increased expenditure." The same criticism was made by Sella.

CHAPTER II

1. N. Marselli, *La rivoluzione del marzo 1876* (Torino, 1876), p. 1.
2. G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, pp. 156 et seq. Fortunato was a distinguished Left Deputy, and his critical analysis of the party is especially valuable because he is in general optimistic both as to its character and capacity. The view expressed here is substantially his; for corroboration by an eminent and fair Deputy of the Right, see S. Spaventa, *La politica della Destra*, where the rise of the Left is discussed in some detail.
3. N. Bonfadini, "I partiti parlamentari" in *Nuova Antologia*, op. cit., p. 632. Cf. also della Gattina, op. cit., p. 224.
4. A. Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 19. Also Oriani, op. cit., p. 385.
5. S. Spaventa, *La politica della Destra*, p. 46. On the similarity of Right and Left, see also B. Croce, *History of Italy*, p. 7, and G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 294. A bitter comment is that of F. Crispi, who (himself a Left Deputy) said in 1880 that "for two years Italy has had a masked government by the 'Right' . . . we want a loyal and Liberal government, not one that lives by hypocrisies, and that, disguising itself as democratic, works by means of lies." (*Discorsi elettorale*, 1865-86, pp. 37 et seq.)
6. A. Plebano, op. cit., p. 49. Also Bonfadini, op. cit., p. 630.
7. B. Croce, op. cit., p. 15.
8. Ch. Seignobos, *Histoire de l'Europe contemporaine; évolution des partis et des formes politiques*, 1814-1914, p. 452. Cf. also della Gattina, op. cit., p. 259.
9. Cf. also the remarks of T. Okay in Chapter VIII (*United Italy*) of the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. xii, p. 215.

10. The superiority of the Right in this respect and in respect of political education has, so far as I know, not been questioned by any Italian writer. With all its faults the party was something like an élite in public affairs, and its standards were respected even by its enemies.
11. S. Barzilai, *Vita parlamentare* (Rome, 1912), pp. 113-17. Other aspects of his character in Giolitti, p. 60. On the early relations between Zanardelli and Depretis, see della Gattina, p. 139.
12. On the Cairoli family, see Michele Rosi, *I Cairoli*.
13. Della Gattina, op. cit., p. 239. On Nicotera, compare the character sketch given by Giolitti, *Memoirs of My Life*, p. 60.
14. On Depretis, cf. also the character sketch in G. McClellan, *Modern Italy*, pp. 139-40. A useful book is *Depretis*, a biography by L. Breganze.
15. The saying was first quoted by S. Barzilai (op. cit., p. 23), though it has since become classical. "Bisogna . . . farne quanto meno si può; basta, alle occasioni, quando si vedono all'orizzonte dei nuvoloni, mettere le spalle al muro ed aprire l'ombrello."
16. The best account of the financial policy pursued by Depretis is that of A. Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana*, vol. II. See especially pp. 15 et seq.
17. Cf. A. Depretis, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. VI. Especially p. 265: ". . . ci siamo proposti di fare sì che non iscemino nemmeno di una lire le rendite dello stato, e che nessuna nuova spesa sia consentita se non si prevedono i mezzi per farvi fronte."
18. For an analysis of these four measures, see A. Plebano, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 70 et seq. For the official exposition, see A. Depretis, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. VI, pp. 518 et seq. (Speech of 27th March, 1877.)
19. Cf. A. Plebano, op. cit., vol. II, p. 78.
20. A. Depretis, *Discorso agli elettori del collegio di Stradella* (8th October, 1876). For his defence of the increase in the tax, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. VI, pp. 575 et seq. (The project roused sincere protest from many Left Deputies. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussione alla Camera dei Deputati. 21-25 maggio, 1877. See especially the speeches by Tajani and Bovio.)
21. Cf. A. Plebano, op. cit., vol. II, p. 87. Cf. also G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 311.
22. G. McClellan, *Modern Italy*, p. 145. For Nicotera's attitude, and the Right's criticism of it, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 26 aprile, 1877. As early as December 1876 he had prevented the International holding a Congress in Florence and had prohibited a Roman Catholic Conference at Bologna.
23. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 13 maggio, 1876. (Speech by Cavallotti.)
24. For other details of electoral corruption, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., pp. 300-1; Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. II, p. 110. Later developments

- are analysed in De Viti di Marco, "The Political Situation in Italy," p. 553 (in *The Nineteenth Century*, October 1895).
25. C. Seignobos, op. cit., p. 452, gives the following figures: 385 Ministerialists, 94 Right Deputies, and 20 Republicans.
 26. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 14 dicembre, 1877. (Discussion on the Budget for Public Works. Speeches by Parenzo and Zanardelli.)
 27. Cf. S. Jacini, "Il problema agrario in Italia e l'inchiesta" in *Nuova Antologia*, March 1881. (The fifteen volumes of the Inquiry itself were published in 1881-85.) Cf. also *Cinquant'anni di storia parlamentare*, vol. II, p. 6 (chapter by G. Valenti; edition by the *R. accademia dei Lincei*, Milan, 1911).
 28. See *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 5 marzo, 1877, e del 10 marzo. Bovio made an appeal for purely secular schools; Cairoli's defence of his proposal was accepted by 208 votes to 20. For an interesting comment on the law, see N. Colajanni, *I partiti politici in Italia*, chapter I.
 29. For a discussion of the difficulties in applying the law, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., pp. 314 et seq. A particularly good analysis of the whole educational system (at a somewhat later date) is in Bolton King, *Italy of To-day* (Chapter on Education). An excellent account of the state of ignorance prevailing about 1870 (with quotations from official papers) is in J. W. Probyn, *Italy from 1815 to 1890* (London, 1891).
 30. In the scholastic year 1875-76 pupils of both sexes in all elementary schools, both public and private, totalled 1,931,617. In the year 1877-78 they increased to 2,002,709. In the year 1894-95 they reached 2,566,748.
 31. Cf. the series of articles written by de Sanctis in *Il Diritto* during the year 1877 (especially the numbers for 24th July, 14th August, 20th August). There are also useful articles in *Il Piccolo* during the same period. In general the newspapers of the time give an admirable impression of the prevailing disillusionment. There is a further criticism in G. Ferrarelli, *Scritti politici di F. de Sanctis*, p. 104. For the view that debates in the Camera seemed to have lost their vigour, see M. Castelli, *Carteggio politico* (Turin, 1890-91), vol. II, p. 568. Interesting comments on the attitude of Italians towards the break-up of the old political parties and on their critical spirit are in E. de Lavelaye, *Lettres d'Italie*, 1878-79 (Brussels, 1880).
 32. Cf. A. Lowell, *Government and Parties in Continental Europe*, vol. I, pp. 216-20.
 33. Cf. a circular issued by the National Association in Naples in 1879 and quoted in M. Minghetti, *I partiti politici* (1881), pp. 20-2 ("del governo si fu quasi una speculazione," etc.). Minghetti's book contains an extraordinary amount of information, supported by quotations from contemporary speeches, articles, memoirs, etc. Cf. also the bitter disillusionment expressed in F. de Sanctis's speech at

- Foggia, 11th March, 1880. Other valuable accounts of conditions at this time are L. Zini, *Dei criteri e dei modi di governo nel regno d'Italia* (Bologna, 1876). By the same author, *Dei criteri e modi di governo della Sinistra nel regno d'Italia* (Lettere e note, Bologna, 1880). Cf. also T. Vignoli, *Delle condizioni morali e civili d'Italia* (Milano, 1876).
34. Zanardelli's speech at Iseo, November 1878. Quoted in M. Minghetti, op. cit., p. 18.
 35. *Inchiesta sulle Ferrovie*, parte i, vol. ii, pp. 136, 271; cf. also vol. iii, pp. 56, 75. Discussed also in M. Minghetti, op. cit., pp. 156-57. A brief reference is in A. Lowell, op. cit., vol. i, p. 219. A more detailed source is the debate in the Camera dei Deputati (*Atti parlamentari*, 22nd-27th June, 1876).
 36. M. Minghetti, op. cit., pp. 175-76.
 37. For an account of how these evils persisted even at a later date, see V. Pareto, "The Parliamentary Régime in Italy" (in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 1893). Also P. Turiello, *Governo e governati in Italia* (Fatti), pp. 238 et seq.
 38. Several instances of insurrection and sabotage as a result of unjust treatment are given in Pareto, *ibid.*, p. 680. Cf. also Racioppi, *Storia dei moti della Basilicata nel 1860*, Chapter X. Cf. also *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati, 22nd February, 1892. Speech by the Minister for the Interior. Numerous instances are given in Franchetti e Sonnino, *La Sicilia nel 1876* (Florence, 1877). Cf. also N. Colajanni, *In Sicilia*, especially Chapters VII and IX.
 39. Cf. the remark by de Viti di Marco on this point, "The Political Situation in Italy" (*Nineteenth Century*, October 1895). Cf. also M. Minghetti, op. cit., p. 151, or Colajanni, op. cit., Chapter VIII, and San Giuliano, *La condizione presente della Sicilia*, p. 114.
 40. See M. Minghetti, op. cit., pp. 168-69, etc.; also pp. 176-77.
 41. M. Minghetti, op. cit., pp. 133-35; pp. 141-42; also pp. 150-53.
 42. On the power of the Sindaco and the unjust way in which it was often used, see F. de Sanctis, *Viaggio Elettorale*.
 43. See G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 299. G. McClellan, *Modern Italy*, p. 146.
For the constitutional aspect, see Vincenzo Miceli, *Principi di diritto costituzionale*, pp. 368 et seq.
 44. Cf. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 320. Also A. Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 108, for a description of its restoration by Cairoli.
 45. See *L'Inchiesta agraria, relazione intorno alle condizioni nel quinquennio*. An interesting article by the chief Rapporteur (S. Jacini) is that already cited in *Nuova Antologia*, 1887.
 46. There is an excellent article on the King by Leroy-Beaulieu in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th April, 1878, p. 838 (*Le roi Victor-Emmanuel*). See also the standard work by G. Massari, *La Vita ed il regno di Vittorio Emanuele II*.
 47. Cf. T. Palamenghi-Crispi (editor), *Crispi—Politica interna*.

48. T. Palamenghi-Crispi (editor), op. cit., p. 87.
49. T. Palamenghi-Crispi, op. cit., pp. 106 et seq.
50. On the Cairoli, see M. Rosi, *I Cairoli*. And S. Barzilai, *Vita parlamentare*, pp. 113-17. On Cairoli as a politician, cf. P. della Gattina, *Storia d'Italia dal 1866 al 1880*, pp. 210 et seq. A very unfavourable judgment is that of Vittorio Imbriani, *Fame usurpate*, pp. 367 et seq.
51. There is a careful criticism of Depretis's foreign policy in Visconti-Venosta's speech, *Atti parlamentari*, Discussioni. Tornata del 9 aprile, 1878, pp. 362-65. A cutting analysis is that of Bonghi, *Atti parlamentari*, Sessione 1878-79. Tornata del 3 febbraio, 1879, p. 3880, "What was Depretis' way of dealing with foreign affairs? . . . It is enough to read the despatches signed by him to understand . . . that he dealt with them by means of 'absolute reserve.' No question was ever put to Depretis that he did not reply . . . 'one reserves'. . . . Discussion, he postponed to some future time, and from the Libro Verde it does not appear that this time (for discussion and saying what he thought) ever arrived . . ." etc.
52. *Atti parlamentari*, Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 23 aprile, 1877. On the diplomatic isolation of Italy from 1870 to 1878, see an article by Salvatorelli, in *Rivista storica Italiana* (Nuova serie, vol. i, fascio II, aprile 1923), "L'Italia nella politica internazionale dell'era bismarckiana."
53. Cf. the criticism of Melegari's speech by Petruccelli della Gattina. (*Atti parlamentari*, Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 30 gennaio, 1879, p. 3780.)
54. Cf. G. Salvemini, *La politica estera di F. Crispi* (1919), p. 47. It should be added that Salvemini's estimate of Crispi's capacity is a somewhat prejudiced one, and requires comparison with other sources.
55. For an account of Crispi's conversations with Decazes (September 1877), see *F. Crispi—Politica estera*, pp. 10 et seq. (Editor, T. Palamenghi-Crispi). For the view that France might make war on Italy, see especially pp. 14-15.
56. G. Salvemini, op. cit., pp. 14-16.
57. There is a detailed account of Crispi's discussions with Bismarck in *F. Crispi—Politica estera*. See especially p. 26. "Del resto, se l'Austria prenderà la Bosnia, l'Italia si prenda l'Albania o qualche altra terra turca sull'Adriatico." Cf. also p. 49.
58. For the London discussion, *F. Crispi—Politica estera*, pp. 53 et seq. Derby's advice ("prendete l'Albania") is on p. 56.
59. See *ibid.* Crispi spoke first with Tisza (p. 64), later with Andrassy. (Cf. Crispi's conciliatory remarks about Fiume, etc., p. 66.)
60. Cf. L. Chiala, *Pagine de storia contemporanea*, vol. i, p. 294.
61. Cf. *F. Crispi—Politica estera*, p. 74. Also M. Viana, *Crispi*, pp. 59 et seq.
62. For a notable instance of the way this trait affected his foreign policy, see a criticism by Visconti-Venosta on Cairoli's diplomacy

before the Congress of Berlin. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 31 gennaio, p. 3801. "It . . . [Cairoli's government] . . . not only abstained from every engagement which might compromise our activity, but—more than this—considered that every separate *exchange* of ideas, every separate agreement of ideas, represented a compromise at least of a moral kind. And that it would be imprudent and premature to predetermine our attitude at the Congress, even by expressing any of our opinions or our judgment on the questions raised by the Treaty of San Stefano," etc.

63. The phrase occurred in his speech to his electors at Pavia, 15th October, 1878.
64. Cf. Cairoli's despatch to C. Nigra, Italian Ambassador in Petersburg, in which he boasted that Italy would present herself at the Congress absolutely free from any engagement not only with Russia, but with all European Cabinets. (The despatch is printed in *Atti parlamentari*. "Documenti diplomatici concernenti gli affari d'Oriente" (June 1878, p. 418.) For a very moderate but significant comment on his attitude, see the speech made by Visconti-Venosta, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 30 gennaio, 1879, p. 3801. (With this policy): "There was the danger of remaining outside the treaties and agreements by which the other Powers had in the meantime assured the results of the Congress, and of arriving at Berlin unprepared and ignorant of what had already been decided by the others . . ." etc.
65. For a good instance of Corti's attitude towards European affairs (and his ignorance of them), see his curiously inept response to the interpellations made by Miceli, Visconti-Venosta, and Cavallotti on foreign policy. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 8 e 9 aprile, 1878, especially pp. 382-83.) On the motives of his policy, and the Deputies' agreement with them, see the speech made by S. Jacini to the Senate. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni al Senato. Tornata del 21 gennaio, 1879.)
- 66A. It is only necessary to read through the parliamentary papers of the time to see how far Cairoli's idealism had been accepted. Visconti-Venosta was certainly a realist thinker, but he too had declared that Italy should show herself "wholly disinterested," and that there should be no thought of annexations. (Speech to the Chamber of 23rd April, 1877; speech of 9th April, 1878.) These references are also to be found in Croce, op. cit.
- 66B. Cf. his speech to his electors at Pavia, 15th October, 1878. Also his speech on the Budget for Foreign Affairs, in *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera. Tornata del 30 gennaio, 1879, p. 3888. Excellent criticisms of his policy are those of Petruccelli, op. cit., Tornata del 30 gennaio, pp. 3780 et seq.; de Renzio, p. 3788; cf. also Tornata del 3 febbraio, 1879. Speech by Bonghi, p. 3882.
67. On Irredentism, see G. Bovio and R. Imbriani, *Pro Patria* (1879);

- Discorsi parlamentari*; "La stella dell'esule" (Rome, 1879); Almanacco, *Trento-Trieste* (Rome, 1888). Historical accounts are those of F. Salata, *Il-Diritto d'Italia su Trieste e l'Istria* (Documenti, 1914); or G. F. Guerrazzi, *Ricordi di irredentismo*, 1881-94 (Bologna, 1922); or G. Galavresi, *Italia e Austria*, 1859-1914.
68. The best indication of Imbriani's character is to be obtained from the files of his newspapers. Another good source is Irene Imbriani, *Ricordi*, and *Pro-Patria—alcune pagine di M. R. Imbriani*. On the Imbriani family, see B. Croce, *Una famiglia di patrioti* (Bari, 1927). Other accounts are in Michele Viterbo, *M. R. Imbriani—e l'ora presente*; also the same writer's *Tre Precursori—Imbriani, Bovio, Cavallotti*.
69. The incident was sufficiently important to lead to questions in Parliament. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 29 giugno, 1878.) Speeches by Sella, Alvisi, and Indelli. Zanardelli, in his reply, minimized the episode as the work of a band of youths angered by a recent Austrian prohibition of an excursion party, from Trieste to Venice. On the meetings and agitation directly produced by the Congress of Berlin, see Visconti-Venosta's speech, *Atti parlamentari*. Camera dei Deputati, Discussioni. Tornata del 31 gennaio, pp. 3801-2.
70. Cf. Zanardelli's speech to his electors at Iseo, in *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 92. Cf. also his defence of his policy to the Camera, in May 1878. (*Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 36.)
71. Cf. Zanardelli's speech (*Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 145 et seq.) The figures were quoted to refute Bonghi's accusation of an "immense re-birth" of Republican societies, but they were serious enough.
72. Cf. Ruggiero Bonghi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 674 et seq.
73. G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 92 et seq.
74. Cf. R. Bonghi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 574 et seq.
75. Speech by M. Minghetti. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 3 dicembre, 1878.)
76. F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 312 et seq.
77. A. Depretis, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, p. 87.
78. G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 145 et seq.
79. Cf. Cairoli's announcement of his programme of government, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 24 marzo, 1878.
80. Cf. G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 330.
81. Sella's speech to the Camera, op. cit., Tornata del 4 luglio, 1878.

CHAPTER III

1. G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 334.
2. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 334. And compare Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 174.

3. Depretis himself took the portfolio of the Interior and the interim portfolio of Foreign Affairs; Magliani was given Finance, and Mezzanotte Public Works; Diego Tajani was called to Justice, Coppino to Public Instruction, de la Roche to War, Ferracciù to Marine, and Majorana-Calatabiano to Agriculture. The presence of Coppino, Tajani, and Magliani in the Cabinet shows that it did not lack intellect: the unfortunate point was that with the exception of Tajani (who was over-vigorous) these men were not able to make themselves felt.
4. For Depretis's somewhat resigned attitude towards the removal of the tax, and his view that now the removal had been promised retreat was impossible, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vii, p. 281 (speech on the estimate of the Budget for 1879, Seduta del 28 marzo, 1879): "La situazione attuale per quanto riguarda la tassa della macinazione dei cereali, qual'è? *La questione si è imposta a noi*. Volere o non volere, abbiamo un voto della Camera, e le popolazioni conoscono questo voto. Ed è perciò che ha preso le proporzioni, il carattere, la natura . . . di una questione sociale. Che volete fare? . . ."
5. A. Depretis, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vii, p. 283: "Quali sono gli intendimenti del Ministero intorno alla tassa del macinato? Noi, in ossequio all'autorità della Camera, manterremo e difenderemo davanti al Senato . . . la legge sulla macinazione dei cereali che la Camera ha votato a grande maggioranza. Nel tempo stesso sentiamo il dovere di dichiarare . . . che riteniamo nostro impegno d'onore il difendere al ogni costo l'equilibrio del bilancio. . . . Traendo il succendi queste due dichiarazioni, esso è il seguente: *né macinato, né disavanzo*. Programma abbastanza chiaro e preciso . . ."
6. Magliani was one of the most interesting personalities in the Camera. For a brief account, see Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 128-29; or Giolitti, *Memoirs*, p. 52. A vivid description is that of P. della Gattina, *I fattori e malfattori della politica europea contemporanea*, vol. ii, p. 330.
7. For a brief and clear summary of the modifications introduced by the Senate, see *Atti parlamentari* (second tornata del 27 giugno, 1879, p. 7990). Speech by Pianciani, relatore. The Senate's decision was made on 24th June, 1879, after hearing the forceful speeches of Lampertico and Saracco.
8. A. Depretis, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vii, pp. 281 et seq.
9. This controversy occupies numerous pages in the *Atti parlamentari* for 1878-79. See especially Discussioni, tornata del 28 e del 29 giugno, 1879. For a typical speech upholding the Camera's rights and prerogatives, together with the proposal to abolish the tax, see p. 3023. Speech by Savini: "Può, deve la Camera sacrificare le sue prerogative ed accettare una lezione la quale significa in ultimi termini che *essa non sa leggere nei bilanci?* . . ." And again, a striking indication of Left feeling: "L'imposta del macinato non è una questione di bilancio, e una questione politica e sociale. . . . Pro-

- mettemmo, manteniamo. Se vi vuole la lotta, affermiamo che *qui è la volontà del paese*, al palazzo Madama si sono solamente dei decreti ministeriali." Other interesting speeches are those by Toscanelli, op. cit., pp. 8025 et seq.; Seismit-Doda, pp. 8061-72 (particularly detailed). Cf. Crispi's comment: "A law so amended and in part suppressed is a new law."
10. G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 339. For Cairoli's justification of his attitude, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 2 luglio, 1879, pp. 8300-03.
 11. *Atti parlamentari*, 1878-79. Discussioni. Tornata del 3 luglio, 1879, p. 8361. For a long and spirited defence of his view by Depretis, op. cit., pp. 8346 et seq.
 12. Cf. Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 157; also Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 189.
 13. A detailed analysis is in Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 174-75: "Rifacendo i calcoli su tali basi, riassumerà le sue previsioni in un disavanzo effettivo di L. 6,351,558 per quell'anno 1880, pel quale il Magliani, nella sua esposizione finanziaria, aveva presagito un avanzo di altre 10 milioni." A briefer reference to Grimaldi's procedure is in G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., 341.
 14. Cf. Cairoli's explanation of the crisis in the ministry given in reply to Sella's questionings in the Camera. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 28 novembre, 1879, pp. 8705-6. A briefer reference is in Ruiz, op. cit., p. 341; or in Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 190.
 15. Cairoli's ministry was re-composed after the "marriage" with Depretis on 25th November, 1879. Grimaldi, Varè, and Perez left the Cabinet. Villa was transferred to the Ministry of Justice, yielding the portfolio of the Interior to Depretis. Magliani took Finance with the "interim" portfolio of the Treasury; De Sanctis, Public Instruction; Micele, Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce; Acton, Marine.
 16. For Grimaldi's brief but pointed reply to Cairoli, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Tornata del 28 novembre, 1879, p. 8707: "... Per me tutte le opinioni sono rispettabili, ma ministro o deputato ritengo che l'aritmetica non sia un'opinione."
 17. Compare Cairoli's somewhat uneasy attempt to defend himself against this charge (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Tornata del 28 novembre, p. 8705). Sella's speeches (ibid., pp. 8703-5) for a detached analysis of the subject. A brief but pointed comment is in Ruiz, op. cit., p. 341.
 18. Croce, *History of Italy*, pp. 70-1.
 19. This is brought out clearly in the speeches of the Deputies. See any debate on the tax in the *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 2 luglio, 1879. Cairoli's speech: "The tax is an economic anachronism—an object of implacable resentment."
 20. Cf. Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 183.
 21. Cf. Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 181.

22. Using the material provided by Grimaldi's first calculations, Saracco showed that the Treasury might expect a real deficit of not less than 18 millions. He added that the real question at issue was not whether it was *desirable* to reduce or abolish the tax, but whether *it was possible*.
23. Seduta del Senato, 24 gennaio, 1880. Odine del giorno. "Il Senato, in attesa di provvedimenti efficaci, che permettano di abolire gradualmente la tassa di macinazione, senza pericolo della finanza, sospende le sue deliberazioni sul presente disegno di legge."
24. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 198.
25. On the factionism in the Camera and the disintegration of the Left, see the analysis given later in this chapter. The best indication of the situation is given by the *Atti parlamentari*. Sessione del 1880, vol. ii (del 18 marzo al 29 aprile), pp. 1712 et seq. Especially the speeches by Bertani, Brin, Baccarini, Incagnoli.
Cf. also Cilibrizzi's comment on the elections, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 198: "Facendo appello al paese, si sperò di costituire una maggioranza compatta che scongiurasse il pericolo delle crisi frequenti ed assicurasse nel tempo stesso il trionfo delle riforme più necessarie."
26. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., pp. 343-44, for a good account of these elections and the party rivalries which accompanied them.
27. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 344.
28. Plebano, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 188, has a brief comment on the failure of the elections to change the character of either the deputies or the parties.
29. Cf. *Cambridge Modern History*, Volume *The Latest Age*, Chapter "United Italy" (by T. Okay), p. 215: "The tardy abolition of the grist-tax (1884) made no sensible diminution in the price of bread; and an increase of the duties on corn from 2s. 6d. to 5s. 3d. a quarter in April 1887 followed by a further increase (in February 1888) to 8s. 9d. made the abolition a mere mockery of the poor." Stillman (*The Union of Italy*, p. 368) says that the abolition proved ultimately one of the most disastrous financial steps which the Left ever took, and that it meant simply an additional profit to the bakers and dealers in grain.
30. Compare for instance *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Sessione del 1878-79. Tornata del 30 e del 31 gennaio. Cf. also *ibid.*, Tornata del 3 febbraio.
31. For this anecdote, see Ferdinando Martini, *Cose africaine—Da Saati ad Abba Carima*, pp. 147 et seq.
32. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Sessione 1878-79. Tornata del 3 febbraio, p. 3880.
33. Compare Chiala's view, *Pagine di storia contemporanea*, vol. ii, *Tunisi*, p. 116.
34. For a statement of Italian claims, see Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 204; Solmi, *The Making of Italy*, p. 139; or G. de Luigi, *Il Mediterraneo nella politica europea*, p. 7.
35. The figures given are quoted from S. H. Roberts, *French Colonial Policy*, vol. i, p. 263. In the consular reports (admittedly a very

- partisan source) conflicting estimates are given. E.g. the Italian Consul gives 30,000 for the Italian population in the Regency, and the French Consul only 10,000. In any case, the Italians far outnumbered any other group of Europeans.
36. S. H. Roberts, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 263, for a vivid statement of the French point of view. For a detailed account of the acquisition of Tunis (from a French point of view), see D'Etournelles-Constant, *La politique française en Tunisie* (Paris, 1891).
 37. Cf. the views expressed in the debates on Tunis in the Senate and the Camera. E.g. Camera dei Deputati. Sessione di 1879. Tornata del 30 e del 31 gennaio. The Italian attitude is very well brought out in Chiala, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 115, 140, 153. Cf. especially the letter written by Clemente Maraini to Gambetta, 23rd July, 1880. (Quoted in Chiala, pp. 158-63.) A useful impression by a French observer is that of Madame Adam, in the *Nouvelle Revue*, 1st August, 1880.
 38. See above. Also the speech made by Visconti-Venosta on 31st January, 1879 (*Atti parlamentari*. Sessione di 1879. Tornata del 30 gennaio): "La nostra politica a Tunisi non può essere che una sola, ispirata dell'interesse nazionale, ed è la conservazione dello 'statu quo' nelle condizioni politiche della Reggenza." This view was accepted by Depretis in a speech on 4th February.
 39. N. Colajanni, "La politica estera di F. Crispi" in *Nuova Antologia*, 16th March, 1922.
 40. For a general instance of this feeling, see L. Luzzatti's article in *L'Opinione*, 10th July, 1880. Irene Imbriani, *Pio Italia—alcune pagine di M. R. Imbriani*, pp. 5 et seq., gives an insight into the nervousness created by Austria's strength in the Adriatic.
 41. *Rassegna Settimanale*, 10th August, 1879.
 42. Cf. a memorandum sent by Bismarck to the Prussian Ambassador in April 1868. The text was communicated to Mazzini, and was published in *Politica segreta italiana* (1863-70), edited by L. Roux & Co. (1891, second edition), pp. 353-54.
 43. Raffaello Cotugno, *Prefazione ai discorsi parlamentari di Matteo Renato Imbriani*, p. xxvii. Cf. also Chiala, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 91.
 44. G. Hanotaux, *History of Contemporary France*.
 45. G. Hanotaux, *op. cit.* (English edition), vol. iv, p. 577. Cf. also W. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 220.
 46. Cf. Cairoli's speech. Camera dei Deputati. Discussioni. Tornata del 6 aprile, 1881. Cf. also the reassuring response given by the Bey regarding an Anglo-French understanding by Sir R. Wood, *Consul in Tunis*.
 47. Chiala, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 103-4. Cf. also F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, pp. 82 et seq. These interviews with Waddington are well reported in Cialdini's letters. An interesting article (which uses this material) is that by Andrea Torre, "Come la Francia s'impadrini di Tunisi" (*Rivista di Roma*, April-May 1899).
 48. Cf. Chiala, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

49. Cf. the instructions which Cairoli gave Macciò—instruction which the Consul did not carry out, but which show Cairoli's intentions. Cf. also Cairoli's speech, 16th March, 1880. "Due sono i nostri doveri. L'uno è d'indole politica: mantenere lo 'statu quo.' che è il più favorevole agli interessi della nostra colonia. L'altro è d'indole economica; favorire in ogni miglior maniera lo sviluppo degli interessi materiali; procurare che la evidente lealtà dei nostri intendimenti faccia accettati i nostri consigli pel buon andamento della finanza." For the views of Depretis, see his speech to the Camera, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Tornata del 4 febbraio, 1879. "Riguardo a Tunisi, io divido l'opinione che nell'interesse d'Italia debba mantenersi e difendersi lo 'Statu quo' della Reggenza. Credo che sia questa la base più solida per difendere i nostri interessi."
50. Hanotaux, op. cit. (English edition), vol. iv, p. 579.
51. Cairoli, speech on 19th April, 1880, to the Camera dei Deputati. Also Solmi, *The Making of Italy*.
52. August 1878. For a full account, see Chiala, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 105 et seq.
53. Albert Pingaud, *L'Italie depuis 1870*, p. 84.
54. For a description of these incidents, see Blue-Book, Tunis, No. 6. A despatch from Assein Pasha to Musurus Pasha, 26th April, 1881.
55. Albert Pingaud, *L'Italie depuis 1870*, p. 86, and Chiala, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 259.
56. W. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 223.
57. "Per il momento si limitava alla punizione della tribù insorte, senza punto pensare ad un'occupazione militare permanente e meno ancora all'annessione della Tunisia." Cf. F. Crispi, op. cit., p. 87.
58. "Una volta ingaggiata la lotta, non era possibile prevedere ciò che sarebbe stato necessario fare. Il governo francese si sarebbe in seguito regolato secondo gli avvenimenti." Giacomo Curatulo, *Francia ed Italia*, p. 114 et seq. Also Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 208.
59. 6th April, speech by Cairoli to the Camera: "Come l'Italia e Inghilterra furono e sono in cordiale comunicazione rispetto a tutte le presenti questioni, così potemmo accertare della identità di idee nello apprezzare la questione di Tunisi."
60. A. Bonghi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 137 et seq.
61. In 1874 there were 571,939 electors, of whom 318,517 or 55.69 per cent voted. In 1876, the electorate had increased to 605,007 and 358,258 voted (59.22 per cent). The figures for 1880 were 621,896 electors (59 per cent).
62. Cf. for instance, the views of Fortunato, op. cit., vol. i, p. 113: ". . . per uscire da questo stato di atonia . . . non vi è addirittura se non un mezzo solo: chiamare realmente alle urne tutte le classi sociali, od almeno il maggior numero possibile di elettori, senza paure . . . senza ipocrisie. Sì, o signori. Affidiamoci realmente, . . . alle 'virtù popolari,' facciamo circolare realmente nuovo sangue nel corpo politico."

63. Cf. G. Fortunato, op. cit., vol. i, p. 157. Also A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni* (1899-1909), pp. 112-14.
64. R. Bonfadini, "I partiti parlamentari," in *Nuova Antologia*, 1894, p. 631.
65. Bonfadini, op. cit., analyses in detail the Left's failure to maintain its promises. "Per colmo della sua fatalità, al Sinistra venne distruggendo colle sue mani ad una ad una quelle parvenze di programma, colle quali era salita al governo . . ." etc.
66. G. Fortunato, op. cit., vol. i, p. 156: "Dopo quattro anni dacchè imperava la Sinistra . . . S'era giunti a un punto, che la durata di un governo qualsiasi non sembrava più possibile in Italia . . . permanente la crisi parlamentare perchè un gran disordine aveva infranto ogni compagine nelle file della maggioranza; rapidissime le crisi ministeriali, perchè non si trattava se non di vedere se il potere dovesse appartenere a un solo o ad alcuni o a tutti insieme i capi del partito." (The criticism is particularly valuable because Fortunato was a distinguished Left thinker, a man of sincere Liberal opinions and generally optimistic as to the possibility of reforming his party.) Cf. also the views of the deputy Incagnoli, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Sessione del 1880, vol. ii, p. 1717: "Il grande partito della Sinistra oggi ha perduto quella compatezza che ebbe. . . . Diviso in schiere o manipoli diversi, sente consumare le sue forze, e deplora lo stato di confusione in che si ritrova. . . . Non più ci uniscono le pure idee e le nobili aspirazioni; ma una trista vicenda ci tira fatalmente sotto la guida di uomini che si contendono il potere, sotto il finto pretesto di salvare il partito."
67. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Sessione del 1880, vol. i (Dal 18 marzo al 29 aprile), pp. 1712-13 et seq.
68. The speech by Brin is also in the parliamentary papers, *ibid.*, p. 1713.
69. Cf. the historical sketch of attempts to reform the franchise in G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., pp. 351 et seq. It forms the basis of the present account.
70. Cf. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 353.
71. Cf. Felice Cavallotti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 216 et seq. Or, better, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni. Tornata del 31 maggio, 1880, pp. 32 et seq. Cf. Nicotera's warning against passing the motion.
72. For Garibaldi's ideas on universal suffrage, see E. Ximenes, *Cento Lettere di Garibaldi*.
73. P. Vigo, *Storia degli ultimi trent'anni del secolo XIX*, vol. iii, pp. 223 et seq. Also G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 356.
74. A. Guiccioli, *Quintino Sella*, vol. ii, pp. 354 et seq.
75. E. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 216. Cf. also P. Vigo, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 257.
76. Cf. A. Depretis, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vii, pp. 688 et seq.
77. Ruggiero Bonghi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 152 et seq.
78. F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 495 et seq.

79. F. Crispi or G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 567 et seq.
80. G. Fortunato, op. cit., vol. i, ch. v, *Scrutinio de lista*, especially pp. 104 et seq (detailed criticism Lacava's views).
81. G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 567 et seq.
82. For a good short analysis of the law, see F. Ogg, *Government of Europe*, or Lowell, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, vol. i, pp. 157 et seq. There is a very detailed account in G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 354.
83. G. Lowell, op. cit., p. 105.

CHAPTER IV

1. Numerous examples could be cited of the pessimism prevailing at this time. It pervades the writings of political theorists and even of the popular novelists who concerned themselves with political events. A typical remark is that of S. Spaventa, *Lettere politiche*, pp. 173-74: "it might well be said that we are in a slough, and have no hope of getting out of it." The remark was later confirmed by Depretis: "Spaventa is right. We are in a slough, and in it up to our eyes." (Quoted from B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, p. 12.) Perhaps the best idea of the character of this pessimism is to be gained from reading through the *Atti parlamentari*; apart from these, however, typical aspects appear in the following works: G. Mosca, *Sulla teoria dei governi e sul governo parlamentare* (1884). Also (by the same author written at a later date) *Elementi di scienza politica*. An interesting book that by Angelo Majorana, *Del parlamentarismo mali, cause, rimedii* (1885). P. Turiello, *Governo e governati in Italia—Fatti*. Also G. Arcóléo, *Governo di gabinetto nel governo parlamentare* (1881). A useful article is that by R. Bonghi in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st June, 1884. A detailed study of Italian conditions is in the three-volume work of P. Siliprandi: "Capitoli teorico-pratici di politica sperimentale in considerazione dei mali d'Italia e della necessità di reformare lo Stato." For a less technical indication of the general gloom, see C. Lombroso, preface to *Due Tribuni* (1883), and for a striking call to reform the series of articles written by de Sanctis in *Il Diritto* during 1877. (Numbers for 24th July, 4th August, 20th August.)

It should be added that hardly any of the works touch on foreign policy. With most the emphasis is on internal evils: the best all-round account, admirably expressing the feeling of the time, is Petruccelli della Gattina's *Storia d'Italia dal 1866 al 1880*.

2. Cf. B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, pp. 97 et seq., for this attitude towards the Risorgimento and an interesting account of the people's want of confidence in political life.
3. S. Sonnino's view of Depretis's policy: "... fu la politica alla giornata, politica di equilibrio e di ripieghi..." (Rabizzani e Rubbiani—*Sonnino*, p. 93). Cf. Petruccelli della Gattina, op. cit., p. 346.

4. Perhaps the best indication of Margherita's personality is Carducci's poem, *Alla regina d'Italia*. Cf. also his later ode, *Il liuto e la lira*.
5. There is a brief, but really illuminating character sketch of Umberto in Petruccelli della Gattina, op. cit., pp. 302 et seq. Cf. also E. Pedrotti, *Vita e regno di Umberto I*.
6. For Carducci's disillusionment, see especially his *Giambi ed Epodi* (Canto dell'Italia che va in Campidoglio; Io Triumphe—in *Morte di Giovanni Cairolì*, etc.). Other aspects appear in his prose writings.
7. For a good general account of this material progress, see B. Croce, op. cit., pp. 51 et seq. Cf. also G. Volpe, *L'Italia in cammino*, pp. 60 et seq.
8. Croce, op. cit., p. 57.
9. There are of course many profound and obvious differences between Spanish and Italian political experience. A knowledge of the one is, however, often very illuminating for comprehension of the other, and such a brilliant work as S. de Madariaga's *Spain* contains invaluable hints for an understanding of some of the evils in Italian political life.
10. Cf. L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 136.
11. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 224.
12. Cf. G. Bovio, *Discorsi parlamentari*, pp. 89 et seq.
13. Sonnino's article (printed in the *Rassegna Settimanale*, 29th May, 1881) has been much quoted. A useful comment on it is in the Preface to his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 59. Cf. also his speech of the 6th December of the same year, for his wish to conclude an alliance with Germany and end once for all vacillation between the latter Power and France (*Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 67).
14. For Marselli's views, see his article in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st July, 1881.
15. Cf. W. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments*, p. 226.
16. L. Chiala, "Pagine di storia contemporanea" (*La triplice e la duplice alleanza*, vol. ii, pp. 48 et seq.).
17. P. Vigo, *Storia degli ultimi trent'anni del secolo xix*, vol. iii, p. 76.
18. A very detailed account of this episode is in G. Manfroni, *Sulla soglia del Vaticano*, vol. ii, chaps. x, xii. Brief accounts are those of S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., p. 225, and W. Langer, op. cit., pp. 230 et seq. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., pp. 375-76.
19. Manfroni, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 60; also F. Salata, *Per la storia diplomatica della questione romana* (Milan, 1929), p. 134.
20. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 235.
21. Cf. L. Chiala, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 178-97.
22. On Cairolì's wish for an alliance with the Central European Powers and Depretis's opposition, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 94. Also L. Chiala, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 224. For a particularly striking instance of Depretis's feeling, op. cit., pp. 186 et seq.
23. F. Crispi, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 119-22.
24. Cf. F. Crispi, op. cit., p. 123. Also L. Chiala, op. cit., p. 13.

25. For Robilant's response, see L. Chiala, op. cit., pp. 88 et seq. On his general attitude, see *Nuova Antologia*, 1st November, 1897. Article by R. Cappelli.
26. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 237. Cf. also W. Langer, op. cit., p. 232. Cf. also Manfroni, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 67.
27. W. Langer, op. cit., pp. 230-31.
28. *Documents diplomatiques français*, vol. ii, nos. 369, 440, etc. W. Langer, op. cit., p. 226, also cites *Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, 1871-1914, vol. iii, no. 535.
29. *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. iii, nos. 538-40.
30. The articles appeared in the *Berlin Post* of 1st, 10th, and 17th December, 1881. For Bismarck's use of the Roman question to intimidate Italy, see F. Salata, "La Questione romana e la triplice Alleanza" (*Nuova Antologia*, 1st March, 1923). The Roman question was treated "Come un pendolo in continuo movimento nell'ingranaggio della sua politica" . . . Cf. also *Italy* (Nations of To-day series), pp. 136-38.
31. Cf. Sonnino's speech to the Camera dei Deputati, 6th December, 1881, printed in his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 67. Minghetti's speech is in his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. viii, pp. 144 et seq.
32. L. Chiala, op. cit. (*La triplice e la duplice Alleanza*), pp. 230 et seq.
33. Quoted from W. Langer, op. cit., p. 245. G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 380, has a curious remark on the conservative aspect of the Alliance. He suggests that its conclusion was an immediate result of the electoral reform, that the Government wanted to reinforce itself against the possibly democratic influence of the new voters. I have not found any corroboration of this view.
34. On the terms of the Triple Alliance and the negotiations leading up to it, see a series of articles by G. Salvemini in *Rivista delle nazioni latine*, vol. i (Florence, 1916). Cf. especially the article 1st July, 1916, pp. 317-46. A useful book is that by Arthur Singer, *Histoire de la Triple Alliance* (French translation, 1915). Cf. also Italicus, *Italiens Dreibundpolitik*, 1870-96 (Munich, 1928). Interesting points are raised in an article in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st September, 1881, "Le Alleanze dell'Italia," by an ex-diplomat.
35. Cf. Salvemini's view that Germany wanted only to be assured of Italy's neutrality. (Article in *Rivista delle nazioni latine*, 1st July, 1916, p. 323.)
36. On Oberdan, see A. Annunziata, *La vita e il martiro di G. Oberdan*; F. Salata, *G. Oberdan*; G. Carducci, *Per G. Oberdan e Alberto Mario*.
37. Cf. F. Salata, *G. Oberdan*, pp. 228 et seq.
38. Cf. G. Carducci, *Per G. Oberdan e Alberto Mario*, p. 9.
39. For the Irredentist view of the Triple Alliance, see for instance the *Discorsi parlamentari* of M. R. Imbriani, or the *Discorsi* of G. Bovio.
40. An excellent article on this early Italian colonization is that by N. Naldoni, "La colonizzazione Genovese nel Mar Nero" (in *Rivista Marittima*, fascicolo di settembre, 1935, xiii). The subject has been

little investigated even by Italians, but some interesting details of the type of cities founded and of their commerce may be read in M. Canale, *Storia di Genova* (Firenze, 1858), or G. Manfroni, *Le relazioni fra Genova, l'impero bizantino ed i Turchi* (Genova, 1898).

41. A different account of the work of Italian travellers and explorers in this period is in Michele Rosi, *Storia contemporanea d'Italia*. A brief sketch is also in G. Volpe, op. cit., pp. 39 et seq. On Antinori, see O. Baratieri, "Orazio Antinori" in *Nuova Antologia*, 15th Novembre, 1882. Gustavo Bianchi was the author of an interesting book, *Terra dei Galli*, which contains an account of his African expedition in 1879. Antonio Cecchi produced a three-volume work (also translated into German), *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (Roma, 1885). For the travels of Pellegrino Matteucci, see *Viaggi Africani di P. Matteucci* by C. Cesari; or *Sudan e Gallas* (Milano, 1877) and *In Abissinia* (Milano, 1880) by the explorer himself. For the scientific work of d'Albertis, see his *All Nuova Guinea—ciò che ho veduto e ciò che ho fatto*.
42. For Romagnosi's theories, see A. Ghisleri, *Le più belle pagine di G. Romagnosi* (Milano Treves, 1931). An interesting brochure on the risorgimento theories of nationality is that by G. A. Belloni, *Lo Stato nazionale nel pensiero del Risorgimento. (Estratto dall' Archivio di storia della filosofia. Anno 1, fasc. 2. Roma, 1932.)*
43. On Mancini, see Petruccelli della Gattini, *I fattori e malfattori della politica europea contemporanea*, vol. ii, pp. 305 et seq.
44. F. E. Boffi, *Saggi storici e parlamentari*, p. 157. Perhaps the best criticism of Mancini as a diplomat is that of "un Italiano," *La politica estera italiana, 1875-1916*, pp. 309 et seq.
45. Sonnino's view has been much quoted. Cf. L. Chiala, op. cit. (*La Triplice e la Duplice Alleanza*), p. 386.
46. For a brief account of these events, see S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 299.
47. For Crispi's view, see F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, p. 118.
48. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 10 marzo, 1883.
49. For Mancini's speech, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. vii, pp. 199 et seq.
50. Cf. P. Mancini, *ibid.*, vol. viii, p. 149.
51. A very good account of the acquisition of the Bay of Assab is in G. Mondaini, *Manuale di storia e legislazione coloniale* (1927), pp. 13 et seq.
52. P. Mancini, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. viii, p. 162.
53. Cf. G. Salvemini, "L'Italia a Massaua" (nel *L'Azione*) 6th January, 1924). Cf. also S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 304.
54. Cf. F. Crispi, *La prima guerra d'Africa*, pp. 4-5.
55. Cf. B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, p. 111.
56. F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 734 et seq.
57. Cf. G. Mondaini, *Manuale di storia e legislazione coloniale*, p. 43.

58. Cf. G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale d'Italia*, p. 406. Also S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., p. 284.
59. Cf. L. Chiala, *Pagine di storia contemporanea* (la Triplice e la Duplice), p. 415. Cf. also *Atti parlamentari*. Camera dei Deputati. Discussioni. Tornata del 23 gennaio, 1886.
60. On di Robilant's handling of European relations, see the two articles by R. Cappelli in *Nuova Antologia*; one in June 1900 ("Il conte di Robilant"), and another (especially useful) in November 1897—"La politica estera del conte di Robilant." Cf. also L. Chiala, op. cit., pp. 480 et seq. And G. Salvemini, "Di Robilant e la trasformazione della triplice" (in *L'Azione*, 6 gennaio, 1924).
61. Cf. G. Mondaini, *Manuale di storia e legislazione coloniale*, pp. 44-5. Cf. also G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 415.
62. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*, Camera dei Deputati. Discussioni. Tornata del 24 gennaio, 1887. The original Italian is almost impossible to render in English: "... non mi pare che nel momento attuale convenga ... attaccare tanta importanza a quattro predoni che possiamo avere tra i piedi in Africa ..." Quoted also in Chiala, op. cit., p. 479.
63. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 316.
64. For a good description of popular feeling and the attitude of the Press, see P. Turiello, *Governo e governati in Italia—Fatti* (Bologna, 1883), pp. 301 et seq. The epigram which went the rounds of Italy was entitled "Napoli all'Italia":
- "Questo lutto che porti
E segnale di vita e non mortorio:
I cinquecento morti
Stanno a Montecitorio."
65. On the difficulties of resolving the crises, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 416. The best impression of the negotiations and petty bargainings among party leaders is given by the entries in F. Crispi's Diary. (See T. Palamenghi-Crispi, *F. Crispi—politica interna, diario e documenti*, pp. 173 et seq.)
66. For the general bitterness in this regard, see P. Turiello, op. cit., pp. 302-30.
67. An excellent description of Transformism is that by R. Bonfadini, "I partiti politica" in *Nuova Antologia*, 1894. Another good account (closely related to the political events of the time) is that of G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., ch. xviii, pp. 388 et seq. An interesting analysis is that of G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. i, pp. 187 et seq. Cf. also C. Seignobos, *Histoire de l'Europe contemporaine; évolution des partis et des formes politiques*, 1814-1911, p. 458: "... Son système consistait à abandonner les ministres trop compromis et à reconstruire une ministère nouveau avec les débris de l'ancien ..." etc. A useful description is that of C. Stillman, *The Union of Italy*, p. 375. For a curious defence of Transformism,

see Croce, op. cit., pp. 20-1; and G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. i, pp. 36 et seq.

68. R. Bonfadini, op. cit., p. 635.

69. C. Seignobos, op. cit., p. 458.

70. Cf. F. Crispi, *Discorsi elettorali*, pp. 125 et seq.

71. Cf. F. Minghetti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. viii, pp. 251 et seq.

72. F. Cavallotti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. 1, p. 421.

73. F. Crispi, *Discorsi elettorali* (1865-86), p. 217 et seq.

74. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 288-89. Or see F. Cavallotti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 488.

CHAPTER V

1. Cf. F. Crispi, *Pensieri e Profezie*, p. 205.

2. Some of these contrasts are analysed in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 597-98.

3. For Crispi's patriotism, see his severe critic and adversary, N. Colajanni, "La politica estera di F. Crispi" in *Nuova Antologia*, 16th March, 1922, p. 204: "Tutti . . . amici ed avversari, conservatori e democratici . . . non possano che provare una ammirazione illimitata per il suo ardente magnifico patriottismo. Anche gli errori suoi non furono che la conseguenza delle sue costanti preoccupazioni patriottiche." Cf. also G. Volpe, *F. Crispi*, p. 19: "Un gran disinteresse, una dedizione assoluta alla sua patria." Croce, op. cit., p. 169. Stillman, *Crispi*, passim.

4. Quoted from V. E. Orlando's *Crispi* (1923), pp. 18-19: "Nel nostro paese nessuno è forte; solamente l'Italia può esserlo." As a Sicilian, Crispi had the Sicilian conception of the importance of the State.

5. Numerous instances may be cited of Crispi's independence. In 1880 he did in fact offer parliament his resignation because censured for his persistent criticism. Cf. his defence to Correnti on this occasion: "I can annihilate myself; I can disappear from political life; be silent—never . . ." etc. On his refusal to join party intrigues, see L. Fortis, *Crispi* (1895), pp. 17-18; T. Palamenghi-Crispi, *F. Crispi—politica interna* (1924), p. 30; or G. Volpe, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

6. Cf. his famous formula: "The monarchy unites us—the Republic would divide us."

7. For Crispi's pacifism, see his *Ultimi scritti*, pp. 293 et seq.

8. These contrasts are well brought out in Orlando, op. cit., pp. 10-11. Cf. also A. Jemolo, *Crispi* (1922), pp. 12 et seq. (Jemolo's article has an excellent analysis of Crispi's work both in foreign and home affairs.) For Crispi's integrity in matters of private principle, cf. the story about him as a poor and unknown jurist. Asked by a Bourbonist examiner whether the Bourbon king has not the right to levy taxes without consent of the Sicilian parliament, he replied flatly in the negative, took off his robes, and abandoned the career of magistrate. It meant years of grinding poverty.

9. Cf. A. Jemolo, op. cit., p. 42.
10. For this law, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 428. A more detailed account is in F. Crispi, *Politica interna*, pp. 207-9.
11. F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. II, pp. 874 et seq. On the law itself, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 426.
12. Described in F. Crispi, *Politica interna*, pp. 212-14.
13. Ibid., pp. 209-11. Also G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 443.
14. F. Crispi, op. cit., pp. 213-17.
15. Croce, op. cit., p. 164.
16. The words are those of a contemporary. See V. Ricci, *F. Crispi* (1887), p. 3. For the sense of confidence he inspired, see G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., p. 449. (A collection of striking quotations from contemporary opinion is given by B. Croce, op. cit., p. 310. Cf. especially the remark of the Prince of Camporeale (23rd October, 1888): "Your strong and sagacious policy has raised the prestige of the country higher than it has been since the foundation of the Kingdom.")
17. Crispi's speech at the banquet at Turin, 25th October, 1887, in *Scritti e discorsi politici*, p. 695. It is a free translation; in the original: . . . "tutto un paese, tutta una nazione, tutto un parlamento può stringersi intorno ad esso."
18. Bonfadini, op. cit., pp. 636 et seq. Cf. also Ruiz, op. cit., chaps. xix, xx, xxii.
19. *Atti parlamentari*. Tornata del 15 febbraio, 1889. Discorso.
20. Cf. Croce, op. cit., p. 164, for a somewhat similar remark on Crispi's superiority.
21. For Crispi's refusal to placate opposition, see any *Atti parlamentari* of the period. The crossfire of debate is the best illustration of it. For his eagerness to assume the responsibility of unpopular measures, see A. Jemolo, op. cit., p. 59.
22. For the success of the King's tour in the Romagna, cf. his telegram to Crispi. (Printed in Ugo Pesci, *Il re martire*, pp. 277 et seq.)
23. See F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, pp. 195 et seq. Also his *Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 254. On the general negotiations *re* the tariff, see A. Billot, *La France et l'Italie*, vol. I, chap. IV, viii.
24. For the economic crisis in Italy which followed the tariff war, see Testi's "La Crise économique de l'Italie" (*Nouvelle Revue*, 15th February, 1891). Also H. Geffkin, "The Economic Condition of Italy" (in the *Contemporary Review*, October 1890, pp. 609-25). Cf. also A. Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana*, vol. III, pp. 131 et seq.
25. See F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. III, pp. I et seq.
26. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. II, p. 365.
27. For Crispi's difficulties in composing a ministry, see his *Politica interna*, p. 241.
28. R. Bonghi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. II, pp. 666 et seq.
29. See G. Arangio-Ruiz, op. cit., pp. 454 et seq. For the general principle of both laws, see F. Crispi, *Politica interna*, pp. 219 et seq.

30. Cf. G. Salvemini, *La politica estera di F. Crispi* (1919): "He was a sincere man . . . volcanic . . . incapable of diplomatic euphemisms, accustomed to speak violently . . . susceptible to praise, even more susceptible to affronts . . ." (Salvemini's article is brilliant and stimulating, but extremely partisan.)
31. The phrase is that of A. Fortis, *F. Crispi*, p. 230.
32. F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, pp. 224 et seq.
33. Cf. un Italiano: *La politica estera italiana* (1875-1916), p. 381. Cf. also Carducci, *Opere*, xii, pp. 443-62. For a different opinion, Croce, op. cit., p. 174. Against Croce, see G. Volpe, *L'Italia in cammino*.
34. Cf. his speech in Parliament, 3rd February, 1879 (*Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, p. 335). The remark was repeated on 17th April, 1881, *ibid.*, p. 439.
35. Cf. his speech in 1890: "Alliances may be compared to marriages; there are those of love and those of convenience." The context makes it clear which was the "alliance of love" and why it had to be renounced. (*Scritti e discorsi politici*, pp. 747 et seq.)
36. See his *Pensieri e profezie*, p. 128.
37. G. Salvemini (op. cit., pp. 39 et seq.) analyses Crispi's attitude towards France. Cf. also N. Colajanni, op. cit., pp. 200 et seq.
38. For an account of these discussions, see G. Salvemini, op. cit., pp. 155 et seq.; N. Colajanni, op. cit., pp. 198 et seq.; also B. Croce, op. cit., p. 171. For Crispi's personal view of the Triple Alliance, see his *Questioni internazionali*, pp. 278 et seq.
39. On this false alarm of an attack by France, see F. Crispi, *Ultimi scritti e discorsi extra parlamentari*, pp. 69 et seq. For Bismarck's incredulity, cf. F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, p. 324. Another account is in G. Salvemini, op. cit., pp. 66-8; or N. Colajanni, op. cit., pp. 202 et seq. A useful account by a contemporary is that of Giolitti (*Memorie*, vol. i, pp. 47-8).
40. See F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, pp. 323 et seq.
41. Cf. F. Cavallotti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, p. 571.
42. See M. Viterbo, *Tre precursori—Imbriani, Bovio, Cavallotti*, p. 27.
43. Cf. F. Crispi, *Questioni internazionali*, pp. 129 et seq.
44. A brief account is in G. Arangio-Ruiz, *Storia costituzionale del regno d'Italia*, p. 469.
45. F. Crispi, *Scritti e discorsi politici*, p. 747.
46. *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, pp. 618 et seq.
47. Cf. di Rudini's programme of government in *Atti parlamentari*. Discussione alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 14 febbraio, 1891, p. 504. For his slogan "ci siamo costituiti nella famosissima compagnia della lesina," see A. Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana*, vol. iii, pp. 203 et seq.
48. See Giolitti's programme of government in *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 25 maggio, 1892.
49. Cf. F. Cavallotti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, p. 204.
50. On the scandals regarding the Bank of Rome, see N. Colajanni,

Banche e parlamento. Also A. Plebano, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 200 et seq. For Giolitti's account (and his defence), see his *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. 1, pp. 70 et seq. A very balanced account is that of S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 461 et seq. A very severe judgment on Giolitti (the "Italian Walpole") is in B. King and T. Okey, *Italy of To-day*.

51. The text of this manifesto was printed in the Roman paper, *Roma*, 3rd December, 1893.
52. On the movement in Sicily, see N. Colajanni, *In Sicilia—gli avvenimenti e le cause*. There is a useful article by Boglietti in *Nuova Antologia* (15th September, 1894, p. 317, "Il socialismo Italiano e gli ultimi moti di Sicilia"). Good studies of conditions in Sicily are: S. di Pietraganzile, *Sempre la Sicilia!* (1895); D. Lombardo, *La Sicilia ed i suoi bisogni* (1896). Also A. Pezzini, *Delle condizioni d'Italia e delle sue urgenti riforme*. See also A. de Grandi, *Sulle condizioni della Sicilia* (1894). Two studies on special aspects are G. Grabinski, *La crisi Siciliana e la divisione dei latifondi* (1895), and E. Loncao, *Il lavoro e le classi rurali in Sicilia durante e dopo il feudalismo*.
53. G. Giolitti, *Memoria della mia vita*, vol. i, pp. 63 et seq.
54. On the development of Socialism in Italy, see R. Michels, *Proletariato e borghesia nel movimento socialista italiano*. Also F. Meda, *Il socialismo politico in Italia*; A. Labriola, *Riforme e rivoluzione sociale*. (On the very first appearance of socialistic ideas in Italy, see an article in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st June, 1897.)
55. Cf. B. Croce, op. cit., pp. 186–87. J. A. R. Mariott, *Makers of Modern Italy*, compares these Sicilian disturbances with the leagues organized by the Irish peasants against their landlords.
56. N. Colajanni (a distinguished Southern Deputy in touch with the leaders of the Sicilian movement) has left us an account of a personal interview which he had with Crispi, and of the latter's suspicions. (See N. Colajanni, article in *Nuova Antologia*, 16th March, 1912, pp. 203 et seq.)
57. For an example of this type of criticism, see G. Bovio, *Discorsi parlamentari*, p. 317. Also F. Cavallotti, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 272 et seq. Further details in *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 21 febbraio e del 3 marzo, 1894.
58. Cf. B. Croce, op. cit., p. 191.
59. On the finance measures of this period, see A. Plebano, *Storia della finanza italiana*, vol. iii, pp. 403 et seq. For Sonnino's courage (as Minister of Finance) in imposing unpopular taxation, see M. Viterbo, *Sidney Sonnino*, p. 25.
60. For an instance of the feeling against African enterprises, see the speeches made by R. Bonghi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, p. 598, and *ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 673. Also the speeches by Imbriani in March 1890 (*ibid.*, p. 63) and by Cavallotti in 1895 (*ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 370). (The African enterprise) is ". . . an enterprise that the nation neither asks nor wants, about which hearts . . . and minds . . . are

- more than divided . . . which has been dragging on for ten years without being able to attract a spark of popularity to itself."
61. On these negotiations, see N. Colajanni, *op. cit.*, pp. 197 et seq. (Includes an interesting quotation from a letter to Crispi by Lord Salisbury.)
 62. Cf. F. Crispi, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, p. 72.
 63. The text of this convention is printed in S. Cilibrizzi, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 258-59. Also in the official publication, *Trattati, Convenzione, Accordi . . . relativi all Africa*, vol. 1.
 64. Cf. G. de Luigi, *Emigrazione ed espansione coloniale*, p. 76. Cf. also the account in F. Crispi, *La prima guerra d'Africa*, p. 135. For General Baldissera's distrust of Menelik, see G. Castellini, *Crispi*, p. 185.
 65. The Italian side of the case against Menelik is admirably stated in a letter from Crispi to Count Salimbeni. Cf. F. Crispi, *La prima guerra d'Africa*, pp. 240 et seq.
 66. F. Crispi, *ibid.*, p. 224.
 67. Cf. B. Croce, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
 68. See F. Crispi, *La prima guerra d'Africa* for the ill-effects of this inconsistency in policy (p. 267).
 69. Cf. Giolitti's comment in his *Memoirs*: ". . . He [Crispi] was a man of great energy, of wide outlook and keen mind, and his general policy was clearly worked out; but his aptitude for details and for the execution of his programme was not correspondingly great. The disaster of Adowa . . . was . . . a result of this defect: he had embarked upon a large and ambitious programme of attack, which was out of all proportion to the strength of the country. He did not know how to supervise its execution and to render the means adequate for his purpose, and the fact that he entered upon it with insufficient means was the principal cause of his failure."
 70. It is historically correct to say that Crispi's ideas came to an end with his fall. The "nationalist imperialism" which began to be generated in Italy after 1910 was definitely modern in inspiration and owed some of its elements to Maurras and the *Action Française*.
 71. For di Rudini's attitude towards the conclusion of peace, see his speech in Parliament. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 17 marzo, 1896: ". . . Non ci accingeremo mai a fare una politica di espansione. . . . Se anche il Negus ci offrisse il Tigré, noi lo rispingeremmo come un dono esiziale ai nostri interessi."
 72. Dissentients from the general attitude were few, but included the distinguished deputy F. Martini (cf. his book, *op. cit.*).
 73. Cf. the criticism of di Rudini's internal policy made by the deputy Nasi. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 17 giugno, 1898.
 74. On the difference in the character of the movement in the North and South, see L. Lodi, *Ventacinque anni di vita parlamentare*, pp. 4

- et seq. A detailed account is that of N. Colajanni, *L'Italia nel 1898, tumulti e reazione*.
75. For a description of the work of repression and the subsequent gratitude expressed to the army, see A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni*, pp. 35-8. (Labriola quotes the telegram sent by Umberto to Bava-Beccaris. His estimate of the King's share in the reaction of the time is a somewhat prejudiced one.)
 76. Cf. an interesting article by de Viti di Marco in the *Giornale degli economisti* (1 giugno, 1898).
 77. The judgment is that of Labriola. "Pelloux non era altro che un generale piemontese, e cioè un pasto di queste qualità: cocciotaggine e ignoranza contadinesca, autoritarismo, e ristrettezza mentale da caserma."
 78. On the Ministry of Pelloux, see L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 12 et seq. Also Labriola, op. cit., pp. 45 et seq. On his foreign policy, cf. the criticism of L. Bissolati, *La politica estera del'Italia dal 1897 al 1920*.
 79. "Obstructionism" was mainly organized by E. Ferri. It gave rise to some exciting incidents in Parliament. Cf. for example, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 30 giugno, 1899.
 80. Sonnino expressed his views in an anonymous article entitled "Ritorniamo allo Statuto" (in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st January, 1897).

CHAPTER VI

1. On the difficulties of finding a successor to Saracco, see especially F. Papafava, *Dieci anni di vita italiana, 1899-1909* (Bari, 1913), vol. i, pp. 148 et seq. Cf. also G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. i, pp. 172 et seq.
2. Cf. A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni, 1899-1909* (Milano, 1910), pp. 108 et seq.
3. Ibid., pp. 102-3, and Papafava, op. cit., p. 148.
4. Zanardelli's personality is best understood from reading his speeches. (G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*.) For an analysis of his character, see especially L. Lodi, *Venticinque anni di vita parlamentare*, pp. 41-3. Other good descriptions are in S. Barzilai, op. cit., p. 113, or S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 241-42. For an acute but somewhat prejudiced description of his philosophy, see A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 130-32.
5. For Zanardelli's attitude to universal suffrage, see *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 567, 642.
6. On Marcora's and Sacchi's refusal, see Lodi, op. cit., pp. 43-4.
7. F. Papafava, op. cit., p. 148.
8. On the composition of the Cabinet, see L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 44-5. Also R. de Cesare, *Mezzo secolo di storia italiana*, p. 112.
9. Wollemborg's schemes are keenly discussed in Papafava, op. cit., passim.

10. Papafava, op. cit., vol. i, p. 152. Quoted also in Croce, *A Short History of Italy*, p. 225. The subsequent disillusionment experienced by Papafava and his retraction of his optimism are not mentioned by Croce. (See Papafava, op. cit., vol. i. Cf. especially pp. 170, 187, 192.)
11. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 187-88.
12. Quoted in Papafava, op. cit., pp. 169-70. Article by Pantaleoni in *Giornale del Popolo*, 19th February, 1901.
13. Cf. A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 108.
14. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 117-18.
15. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 46.
16. Cf. F. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 248-49. (An interesting quotation from the journal *Direzione*, March 1902, together with a critical analysis by Papafava himself. It should be remembered that Papafava was among the most noted Liberals of the day, and as such could speak with peculiar authority.)
17. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 58.
18. Cf. Lodi, op. cit.
19. Cf. G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. i, pp. 455 et seq.: "Essenzialissimo impegno nostro è quello di mantenere con devozione scrupolosa i principii della libertà."
20. Cf. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 154. Cf. also the analysis of Labriola, *ibid.*, pp. 117-18.
21. For an analysis of the reasons underlying the Camera's rejection of Wollemborg's Bill, see Papafava, op. cit., pp. 190 et seq. Cf. also his bitter sarcasms anent Carcano, p. 195. There is an interesting article on taxation reform by Sonnino in *Nuova Antologia*, 16th September, 1901. A very well-informed judgment on the taxation system in general is that of Bolton King, *Italy of Today*, p. 137: "Taxation . . . [in Italy] . . . is out of all proportion to the resources of the country—protective duties rob the poor to fill the pockets of the rich landlord and manufacturer. . . ." Cf. also p. 138: "According to the calculations of M. Delevet, Italy pays a higher percentage of its income in taxes than any other of the larger European States except Spain. The State takes 17 per cent as against 12 per cent in France, 8 per cent in Germany, 6 per cent in England. Another calculation, founded on M. de Foville's figures, would place taxes at 30 per cent of income. And in Italy, the taxes fall heaviest on the poor. . . . According to Signor Flora, 54 per cent fall on the poor and working classes."
22. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 163.
23. Pantaleoni in the *Giornale del Popolo*, 19th February, 1901.
24. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 167 et seq.
25. There is an interesting footnote on this point in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 163.
26. A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 121.
27. A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 121.

28. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 47-8.
29. Statistics taken from A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 121.
30. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 48, and cf. A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 120.
31. Salvatore Barzilai, *Vita parlamentare*, pp. 337-39.
32. G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. ii, chap. xxviii, p. 260.
33. G. Fortunato, op. cit. The last phrases are difficult to render in English: "... Oggi non c'è chi non si proclami vittima d'una condizione intollerabile di cose, e non sia inoltre convinto che il governo si muova non per motivo di giustizia, ma solo per sentimento di paura, e unico mezzo per ottenere sia 'l'imporsi' il 'sopraffare' . . . E pochi confessano che . . . ora scontiamo un po' tutti gli sperperi e i falli del passato, il lungo promettere con l'attendere corto."
34. G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. i, p. 177.
35. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Senatori. Tornata del 29 aprile, 1901, pp. 1334 et seq.
36. Ibid. Tornata del 30 aprile, 1901, pp. 1355 et seq.
37. G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. i, p. 180.
38. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 21 giugno, 1901, pp. 5498 et seq.
39. For Orlando's speech, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 20 giugno, 1901, pp. 5436 et seq.
40. An excellent statement of the railwaymen's grievances is in *Nuova Antologia*, 1st February, 1902, p. 539. (Article by F. Tedesco.) The historical details of the dispute are in *L'Economista*, 16th February, 1902, p. 97.
41. Cf. Lodi's comment, op. cit., p. 50.
42. Cf. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 50-1. Also S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 172.
43. Cf. Giolitti's speech in the Camera. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 14th marzo, 1902, pp. 149 et seq.
44. Cf. A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 128 et seq.
45. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 172. A brief but good analysis is in Papafava, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 243 et seq.
46. Cf. the bitter criticisms made in the *Corriere della Sera's* article, 9th March, 1902.
47. Cf. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 239 et seq.
48. G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. ii, pp. 468 et seq. (Speech in June 1901.)
49. Cf. the bitter reproaches brought against Zanardelli in the Camera. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata dell'11 e del 12 marzo, 1902.
50. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 49-50. Cf. also the account in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 170-71. (It should be noted that Cilibrizzi's own remarks on Zanardelli's connection with Masonry are somewhat unfair, while the source he cites in support of them is a mass of partisan distortion.)

51. See Michele Rosi, *Storia contemporanea d'Italia*. (Roma, 1934.)
52. Cf. Papafava, op. cit., vol. i, pp. 247-48.
53. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 245 et seq.
54. Papafava, op. cit., pp. 293-94.
55. See R. Commissione d'Inchiesta per Napoli. *Relazione sull'amministrazione comunale*, vol. ii, pp. 787 et seq.
56. Cf. the interpellations of 9th December, 1901, and Zanardelli's reply on 13th December, 1901. See also 21st April, 1902, interpellation by Ettore Ciccotti. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati.
57. G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, pp. 517 et seq.
58. An extraordinary number of books and documents have been published on the question of the South, and an adequate bibliography would occupy pages. The most important works are the following: P. Villari, *Lettere meridionali* (one of the first books written on the subject). By F. Nitti (brilliantly written but partisan), *Nord e Sud* (Torino, 1900); *L'Italia all'alba del secolo xx* (Torino, 1901); *Napoli e la questione meridionale* (Napoli, 1903). Very thorough (and reliable) analyses are contained in the writings of Franchetti: *Condizioni economiche ed amministrative delle provincie napoletane* (Firenze, 1875). Cf. also Franchetti and Sonnino, *La Sicilia nel 1876* (excellent).

Special points are dealt with by di Rudini, "Terre incolte e latifondi" (Bologna, 1895), and A. de Viti di Marco, "Trattati di commercio e interessi meridionali" (in *Giornale degli economisti*, July 1903). Labriola advances a theory of his own in his *Storia di dieci anni*, pp. 177 et seq. A general and useful work by a Southerner is E. Ciccotti's *Sulla questione meridionale* (Milan, 1904).

Excellent modern accounts with up-to-date statistics are: G. Arias, *La questione meridionale* (2 vols. Bologna, 1922); G. Carano-Donvito, *L'Economia meridionale prima e dopo il Risorgimento* (Florence, 1928); E. Azimonti, *Il Mezzogiorno agrario-qual'è* (Bari, 1919). A fundamental source by a very gifted writer is G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano* (2 vols. Reprinted Florence, 1926).

59. This historical contrast is well brought out by Fortunato (op. cit., see above), vol. ii, p. 307. It is somewhat minimized in Franchetti's article, "Un mezzo secolo di unità nell'Italia meridionale" (*Nuova Antologia*, May 1911).
60. Cf. also Labriola, op. cit., pp. 191 et seq. Cf. also R. de Cesare *La fin di un regno*, Roma 1900, vol. i, pp. 258 et seq.
61. On the general lack of communications in the Neapolitan kingdom, see N. Santamaria, *La società napoletana dell'epoca vice-regnale* (Napoli, 1861), vol. i, pp. 85 et seq. Cf. also Nigra's report on conditions in the South in his article, "Napoli nel 1861" (*Nuova Antologia*, 16th January, 1902, pp. 325 et seq.).
62. This analysis both of the classes in Sicily and the effects of the new parliamentary system on them is based on Franchetti's.

63. Cf. G. Fortunato, op. cit., vol. II, p. 322.
64. Cf. V. Piccoli, *Pensieri di Cavour*, pp. 119 et seq. How, after union, the Southern Kingdom passed from the category of lightly taxed States to the category of heavily taxed ones is admirably described by F. Nitti in his *Nord e Sud*.
65. Cf. the various articles written on these two questions by Papafava, op. cit., pp. 151 et seq., pp. 172 et seq., and especially pp. 200 et seq.
66. Cf. Bolton King, *Italy of To-day* (chapter on the South); also Papafava, op. cit., pp. 202 et seq.
67. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was calculated by B. King and T. Okey that while the State spent £2 per inhabitant in Piedmont and Liguria and Latium, it spent less than 12s. in the Abruzzi and in the Basilicata and Calabria.
68. Cf. M. Viterbo, *Il Mezzogiorno e l'accentrimento statale*, pp. 139 et seq. Quoted also in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. III, p. 199.
69. See G. Zanardelli, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. III, pp. 552 et seq. Discorso a Potenza, 26th September, 1902.
70. Most of the details are given in Zanardelli's speech (see above). But cf. also *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 9 dicembre, 1901, pp. 6555 et seq.
71. Cf. especially Zanardelli's *Discorsi parlamentari*, pp. 568 et seq., reply to interpellation by Ciccotti on conditions in the Basilicata.
72. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. III, p. 243; also L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 53-4.
73. Cf. an interesting letter from von Bulow to the German Ambassador at Rome (Wedel). Cited in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. III, p. 221.
74. Cf. the speeches of Guicciardini e De Marinis in *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata dell' 8 giugno, 1901, pp. 4894 et seq., and pp. 4901 et seq. Cf. also A. Labriola's views, op. cit., pp. 155 et seq.
75. See M. J. Basdevant, *Traité et conventions en vigueur entre la France et les puissances étrangères*, tome II, pp. 767 et seq.
76. Cf. an excellent speech by S. Baizilai analysing the disadvantages of the alliance to Italy. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Seconda tornata del 12 giugno, 1901, pp. 5057 et seq.
77. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 54-5.
78. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 54-5.
79. Cf. Albert Pingaud, *L'Italie depuis 1870*, p. 193.
80. There is a good résumé of these negotiations in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 209-11.
81. Quoted from A. Singer, *Histoire de la Triple Alliance*, pp. 173 et seq.
82. Cf. A. Piibram, *Les traités politiques secrets de l'Autriche-Hongrie* (1879-1914), tome I; *Le secret de la Triple Alliance*, p. 332.
83. The text of these letters is quoted in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 212-13. Or see the documents in Giulio Caprin, *I trattati segreti della triplice alleanza*, pp. 127 et seq.

84. Cf. A. Angiolini and E. Ciacchi, *Socialismo e socialisti in Italia*, vol. II, pp. 816 et seq., pp. 884 et seq. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 62-3. The importance of the Socialist demonstrations is summarized in A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 215 et seq.
85. Very well brought out in A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 217-18. Cf. also Lodi, op. cit., p. 63.
86. *Un italiano: La politica estera italiana*, 1875-1916, p. 557.
87. Cf. A. Angiolini e E. Ciacchi, *Socialismo e socialisti in Italia*, vol. II, pp. 680 et seq. Cf. also L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 57. There is a good summary of the discussions at the Congress in the *Tribuna* of 8th September, 1902.
88. Cf. Labriola's remarks on Ferri's editorship, op. cit., pp. 207 et seq.
89. Besides the numbers of the *Avanti* from 18th May, cf. A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 208 et seq. Cf. also Papafava's account of the case, op. cit., pp. 353 et seq.
90. *Avanti*, 18th May, 1903. For Bettòlo's initial defence, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 20 maggio, 1903, pp. 7841 et seq.
91. Cf. A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 211-12.
92. It should perhaps be added that seven years after this Bettòlo again held a series of important public posts and was able to render good service as a Cabinet Minister.
93. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 59-60.
94. Cf. the account of his death in Lodi, op. cit., pp. 63 et seq., and in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 240-41.

CHAPTER VII

1. S. Barzilai, *Vita parlamentare*, p. 350. F. Papafava, *Dieci anni di vita italiano*, vol. I, p. 355. Much the same view is in A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni*, pp. 141 and 143. In his *Memoirs (Memorie della mia vita*, vol. I, p. 182) Giolitti defends himself against the charge of self-seeking by saying that he left Zanardelli's ministry because it enjoyed too scanty a majority in the Camera—but the excuse is a thin one, as S. Cilibrizzi has demonstrated. (*Storia politica. Diplomatica e parlamentare d'Italia*, vol. III, p. 244.)
2. It is interesting to compare the view of S. de Madariaga on this point, *Hierarchy and Anarchy*, p. 159.
3. T. Papafava, op. cit., vol. I, p. 441. Another interesting view of his political personality is that of A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 231 et seq. Also N. Saporito, *Trent' anni di vita parlamentare*, p. 213. . . . Giolitti was a "man who had no lofty ideas in the direction of public affairs, but was actuated by a personal point of view, the result of morbid ambition. (It was his aim) to remain in office as long as he could, and always to return to it . . . to have a Camera devoted to him . . . and on whose power he could always rely . . ."

- etc. For a defence of Giolitti, see the preface to his *Memorie della mia vita*, by O. Malagodi. An interesting criticism and analysis of this defence is in Saporito, op. cit., pp. 139 et seq. For another point of view, see the opinion of G. Prezzolini (*La voce*, 24th October, 1912).
4. Barzilai, op. cit., pp. 348 et seq. Cf. also the same writer's *Luci ed Ombre del passato* (Milano, 1937).
 5. Cf. L. Lodi, *Venticinque anni di vita parlamentare*, p. 66.
 6. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 65-6.
 7. For Giolitti's difficulties in forming a Cabinet, see op. cit., pp. 67 et seq.; also S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., pp. 245-46.
 8. On this point, cf. S. Barzilai, op. cit., pp. 353-54.
 9. For a brief account of the "moral campaign," see F. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 223-24; also F. Papafava, op. cit., p. 379.
 10. Cf. A. Angiolina e Eugenio Ciacchi, *Socialismo e socialisti in Italia*, vol. ii, pp. 893 et seq.
 11. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 1 dicembre, 1903, pp. 9200 et seq. A witty analysis by a contemporary deputy is in S. Barzilai, op. cit., pp. 357 et seq.
 12. The literature of this period contains many descriptions of the "Giolittian majority." Cf. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 70-1; or V. Saporito, *Trent'anni di vita parlamentare*, passim, especially pp. 213 et seq. A brilliant analysis is contained in F. Martini's speech to the Camera. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 7 aprile, 1911, p. 13630. For another view, see J. Alazard, *L'Italie et le conflit Européen*, chaps. ii and iii.
 13. For an excellent account of the evil conditions which had preceded these reforms, see Bolton King, *Italy of Today*. A useful book showing the development of social legislation is Angiolo Cabrini's *La legislazione sociale* (1859-1913).
 14. There is a brief discussion of the changes made in Zanardelli's law in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 254-55. A good criticism of the legislation passed regarding the south is in G. Arias, *La questione meridionale*, vol. i, p. 206.
 15. Cf. T. Tittoni, *Sei anni di politica estera* (1903-9), pp. 63 et seq.
 16. An expression of the depth and general character of this popular sentiment is best gained by reading contemporary newspapers, especially the *Giornale d'Italia*, from the 20th to 24th April, 1904. A useful (but brief) account of the general enthusiasm is in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 269-70.
 17. A significant instance of the practical effects of this policy of affinity is given in A. Salandra, *La neutralità italiana*, p. 230. (Telegram from San Giuliano to Tisza.)
 18. For the reassurances given by Giolitti to von Bulow, in his *Memoirs* (*Memorie della mia vita*, vol. i, p. 222).
 19. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 30 maggio, 1904, p. 13129.

20. A description of the general effects of the strike is in R. Michels, *Storia critica del movimento socialista italiano*, p. 320. For the details of the spread of the movement, see A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 252 et seq. (Labriola does not acknowledge his share in provoking the strike.) For a clear account of the difference between its causes in the North and South, see L. Lodi, *Venticinque anni di vita parlamentare*, pp. 73-4.
21. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 288.
22. For the details of the negotiations with the Pope, S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 290-91; or G. Suardi, "Quando e come i cattolici poterono partecipare alle elezioni politiche," in *Nuovo Antologia*, fasc. 1st Novembre, 1927, pp. 118 et seq.
23. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 77-8.
24. A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni* (1899-1909), pp. 273 et seq.
25. G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. 1, pp. 226 et seq.
26. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 78 et seq.
27. S. Barzilai, *Vita parlamentare*, pp. 372 et seq.
28. Cf. the discussion in the Camera, *Atti parlamentari*. Tornata del 23 marzo, 1905, p. 1624; especially the speech by Salandra, "Sarebbe tempo oggi di dimenticare il funesto culto nazionale dell'abilità e di prostrarci innanzi all'altare della sincerità politica."
29. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 85, and compare also S. Barzilai's speech in the Camera, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 22 marzo, 1905.
30. There is an interesting character sketch of Fortis in Lodi, op. cit., pp. 81 et seq. Cf. also S. Barzilai, *Luci ed Ombre del Passato*; cf. also Giolitti's admission of his extraordinary mental quickness, *Memorie de la mia vita*, vol. i, p. 232.
31. Cf. The discussions in the Camera dei Deputati, *Atti parlamentari*. Tornata del 17 aprile, and Tornata del 18 aprile, 1905, pp. 2555 et seq.
32. Ibid.
33. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 86-7.
34. For an indication of contemporary suspicions regarding Fortis's connection with the Banks, see *Il Pungolo*, 15th August, 1905.
35. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 309-10. Cf. also Labriola's analysis of the effects of the agreement, op. cit., pp. 284 et seq.
36. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 30 gennaio, 1906, pp. 6299 et seq.—S. Barzilai's speech is reproduced in his *Vita parlamentare*, pp. 387 et seq.
37. Sidney Sonnino, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, pp. 180 et seq.
38. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 1 febbraio, 1906, pp. 6385 et seq.
39. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 90-1; also A. Labriola, *Storia di dieci anni* (1899-1909), p. 284. (An illuminating quotation from the Socialist paper *Il Pungolo*.)
40. On Sonnino's character and career, see M. Viterbo, *Sidney Sonnino*

- (Milan, 1923); Rabizzani e Rubbiani, *Sonnino*. A good article is that by Helen Zimmern, "Baron Sidney Sonnino" (in *Fortnightly Review*, 1st July, 1915). The essentials are brought out by Ch. Seignobos in his *Histoire de l'Europe Contemporaine*, p. 465. A criticism of Sonnino's work as a diplomat is that by Count Carlo Sforza—in the *Contemporary Review*, December 1929, "Sonnino and his Foreign Policy."
41. L. Lodi, *Venticinque anni di vita parlamentare*, pp. 97-8. Cf. the general character sketch of Sonnino in V. Saporito, op. cit., pp. 89 et seq.
 42. Cf. an interesting comment by A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 285-86.
 43. "Il gruppo socialista . . . delibera di dare voto favorevole per mettere il nuovo ministero alla prova dei fatti, deciso sin da ora ad ogni combattiva opposizione quando l'azione del Governo si mostri contraria alle libertà popolari o inerte per la realizzazione delle riforme presentate." (The text is in the *Mattino*, 10th March, 1906.)
 44. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 95-6.
 45. On Sonnino's rigorous integrity and efforts to suppress any corruption in administration, see the remarks of such a Socialist opponent as A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 286-87. Cf. also his instructions to the Prefects in the provinces (text in *Giornale d'Italia*, 11th February, 1906), and C. Montalcini, *Prefazione ai Discorsi parlamentari di Sidney Sonnino*, vol. 1, passim.
 46. Cf. Sidney Sonnino, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, pp. 187 et seq.
 47. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 97-8.
 48. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 323.
 49. Cf. S. Sonnino, *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, p. 233. (Also cited in Cilibrizzi, op. cit., p. 324.)
 50. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 10 maggio, 1906, pp. 7988 et seq.
 51. Cf. R. de Cesare, *Mezzo secolo di storia italiana* (3 edizione) (Castello, 1913), pp. 121-22: "Il ministero . . . non riusciva a trovar sèguito nella Camera, nonostante la promessa di leggi sociali, di riforme radicali . . . si andava alla ricerca di pretesti per rovesciare il gabinetto. In verità si temeva che il Sonnino, rigido e austero, non avrebbe governato con i metodi dei suoi predecessori, nè più avrebbe tollerata la inframmettenza dei Deputati negli atti del governo. . . ."
 52. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 325.
 53. The words were those of Angelo Cabrini. See M. Viterbo, *Sidney Sonnino*, p. 40.
 54. Depasse's description of the French politician Ranc, quoted by C. Montalcini, op. cit., p. xv.
 55. This point, and Giolitti's method of dealing with it, are very well brought out in A. Labriola, op. cit., pp. 294 et seq.
 56. Cf. A. Labriola, op. cit., p. 305: "Con i favori ai deputati, con il

lavoro alle co-operative, con l'indulgenza verso i capi del movimento operaio, egli è riuscito ad essere il vero padrone della cosiddetta democrazia . . .⁴"

57. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 111-12.
58. Cf. Lodi's view of Giolitti's attitude towards Sonnino's reforms, op. cit., p. 106.
59. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 12 giugno, 1906, pp. 8328 et seq.
60. For the financial negotiations which were necessary before presenting the Bill, see G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. i, pp. 240 et seq.
61. For Luzzatti's speech to the Camera, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 29 giugno, 1906, pp. 9341 et seq. For a description of public enthusiasm, cf. B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, p. 230.
62. For a general discussion of the findings of the Commission, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 28 giugno e del 3 luglio, 1906.
63. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 116.
64. There is a vivid account of the whole episode in F. Papafava, *Dieci anni di vita italiana* (1899-1909), vol. ii, pp. 680 et seq.
65. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, p. 354. For a brilliant speech in commemoration of E. Gianturco, see G. Fortunato, *Il Mezzogiorno e lo stato italiano*, vol. ii, pp. 385 et seq.
66. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 22 novembre, 1909, pp. 4338 et seq.
67. There is a good and detailed résumé of the trial in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 360-67, though Cilibrizzi is inclined to be more indulgent towards Nasi than most writers. A brief account is in R. de Cesare, op. cit., pp. 123-24. For the personal impressions of one of the Deputies investigating the case, see V. Saporito, op. cit., pp. 46 et seq.
68. Cf. F. Papafava, *Dieci anni di vita italiana*, vol. ii, pp. 629-33. Also L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 113-14, and S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., pp. 340-44. For an interesting account of the ostentatious ceremony with which the staff of the warship treated the clergy participating in the Festival of St. Vincent, see the *Corriere della Sera*, 8th May, 1907.
69. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 18 febbraio, 1908, pp. 19294 et seq.
70. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 27 febbraio, 1908, pp. 19634 et seq.
71. Cf. the questions asked in Parliament by De Felice and N. Colajanni concerning Giolitti's "management" of the electors, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 27 maggio, 1909, e Tornata del 28 maggio, 1909. Cf. also S. Barzilai, op. cit., pp. 120 et seq.
72. Cf. Barzilai's speech to the Camera. *Atti parlamentari*. Tornata del

- 29 maggio, 1909. (Reprinted in his book, *Vita parlamentare*, pp. 433 et seq.)
73. Cf. R. de Cesare, *Mezzo-secolo di storia italiana* (2^a edizione), p. 126. For a cutting criticism of Tittoni's action, see S. Sighele, *Pagine nazionaliste* (Milano, 1910), pp. 146 et seq.
74. Sidney Sonnino. *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, pp. 298 et seq.
75. Cf. the account in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iii, pp. 371-72. Also L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 120 et seq.

CHAPTER VIII

1. On the instability of Sonnino's majority, cf. the comment of F. Martini: "Se la maggioranza sarà volenterosa, non so; costante, no di certo. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 12 febbraio, 1910, p. 4925.)
2. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 123-24.
3. R. de Cesare, *Mezzo-secolo di unità italiana*, p. 128.
4. On Sonnino's optimism regarding his reforms, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, p. 351.
5. For Sonnino's speech on presenting his Government to Parliament, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, p. 324.
6. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 126.
7. On Sonnino's resignation, see his *Discorsi parlamentari*, vol. iii, p. 356.
8. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 130.
9. Cf. S. Barzilai's speech to the Camera dei Deputati. (*Atti parlamentari*. Tornata del 18 marzo, 1911. The speech is also printed in his *Vita parlamentare*, pp. 452-61.)
10. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iv, p. 26.
11. For Luzzatti's programme of government, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 28 aprile, 1910, pp. 6396 et seq.
12. For Credaro's defence of the Bill, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 2 luglio, 1910, pp. 9578 et seq.
13. Cf. R. de Cesare, *Mezzo-secolo di unità italiana*, p. 132.
14. The best criticism of the Senate as an assembly and of its functioning is the report by G. Arcóleo (rapporteur for the commission of inquiry). *Atti parlamentari*. Senato del regno, sessione 1909-13. Atti interni documenti, N.C. II.
15. For Luzzatti's own view of the reform of the Senate, see "Il pensiero di Luigi Luzzatti sulla riforma del Senato" in the *Tribuna*, 10th January, 1919.
16. Interpellation by G. Arcóleo in the Senate. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni al Senato. Tornata del 6 maggio, 1910, pp. 2343 et seq.) Cf. a brief comment by R. de Cesare, op. cit., p. 133.
17. For an indication of these different tendencies, see the debate in the Senate on 9th and 15th February, 1911. (*Atti parlamentari*. Dis-

- cussioni alla Camera dei *Senatori*. Tornata del 9 febbraio, 1911, pp. 4522 et seq.)
18. Cf. L. Lodi, *op. cit.*, p. 130. Also S. Cilibrizzi, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 50.
 19. Cf. S. Cilibrizzi, *op. cit.*, p. 51; and also *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 30 aprile, 1910, p. 6487.
 20. There is an amusing anecdote in this connection quoted by L. Lodi, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
 21. On this compromise, see R. de Cesare, *op. cit.*, p. 134. Cf. also an order of the day passed by the Socialist group. (*Corriere della Sera*, 21 dicembre, 1910.)
 22. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 18 marzo, 1911, p. 13530.
 23. Cf. Lodi's account of this episode, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40. For Giolitti's speech, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati, 18 marzo, 1911, p. 13557.
 24. Cf. a cutting speech by F. Martini: ". . . Se all'onorevole Luzzatti si è sostituito l'onorevole Giolitti che cosa c'è di nuovo? Un po' di Finocchiaro-Aprile e un po' di Nitti." Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 7 aprile, 1911, pp. 13630 et seq.
 25. Cf. L. Lodi, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-43; or I. Bonomi, *Bissolati* (Milano, 1929). The best indication of his character and idealism is to be got from reading his articles in *La politica estera dell'Italia dal 1897 al 1920*" (Milano, Treves 1923).
 26. For Giolitti's own account of his reasons, see *Memorie della mia vita* (Milano, 1922), vol. ii, pp. 288 et seq.
 27. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 6 aprile, 1911, pp. 13583 et seq. The speech is also quoted in full in S. Cilibrizzi, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, pp. 69-70.
 28. Cf. F. Martini's speech to the Camera dei Deputati, *op. cit.*
 29. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata dell' 8 aprile, 1911, pp. 13714 et seq.
 30. Cf. B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, p. 258. For Nitti's defence of the measure, see *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 29 giugno, 1911, pp. 16408 et seq. The best criticism of it was made by Salandra—see his speech in the review *L'Eloquenza* (Annata, 1911, vol. i, p. 555). A useful detailed account is in G. Giolitti, *Memorie*, vol. ii, pp. 279-325.
 31. L. Lodi, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
 32. S. de Madariaga, *Spain*, p. 103.
 33. Some aspects of this spiritual unrest are analysed by B. Croce, *op. cit.*, chapter x; and also by L. Villari, *Italy*, chapter vii.
 34. For Corradini's words, see the Preface to his *Discorsi politici*, pp. 8 et seq. For Maroviglia's speech, see his *Il Nazionalismo italiano*. Atti del Congresso di Firenze (Firenze, 1911), pp. 36 et seq.
 35. Scipio Sighele, *Pagine Nazionaliste* (1910), Preface, pp. 10-11.

36. On d'Annunzio, see especially the book by G. A. Borghese, *Gabriele d'Annunzio*. Cf. also G. Sciortino, *Esperienze anti-dannunziane* (Palermo, 1928). Interesting sidelights on Nationalist feeling are in S. Sighele, *Ultime pagine nazionaliste* (Milan, 1912); *Il nazionalismo ed i partiti politici* (Milan, 1911). See also A. Salandra, *La politica nazionale et il partito liberale*. For an interesting all-round criticism, see B. Croce, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-50.
37. For a brief account of the movement's development, see L. Villari, *op. cit.*, pp. 126 et seq.
38. Cf. E. Corradini, *Discorsi politici*, pp. 89 et seq.
39. Cf. Papini e Prezzolini, *Vecchio e Nuovo Nazionalismo*, p. 13. Cf. also Maraviglia's idea of the function of war, *Il nazionalismo italiano*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 et seq.
40. Cf. Vincenzo Amoroso, *Il sindacalismo di Enrico Corradini* (Palermo, 1929).
41. For Prezzolini's own account of his split with Corradini, see his interesting preface to the book, *Vecchio e Nuovo nazionalismo*, by G. Papini and G. Prezzolini.
42. S. Cilibrizzi, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, pp. 153-54. For a brief account of this penetration with useful references, cf. especially F. Vallardi, *Pionieri Italiani in Libia*, and G. Mondaini, *Manuale di storia e legislazione*.
43. This point is very well brought out in G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. II, pp. 338 et seq.: "La porta si mostrava affatto sorda a tutti i nostri reclami . . . lasciando anzi intravedere chiaramente il desiderio di sradicare qualunque influenza Italiana dalla Libia provocando nello stesso tempo l'entrata in campo di altri interessi, specialmente Tedeschi. . . ."
44. Cf. F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, p. 378; and L. Chiala, *Pagine di storia Contemporanea*, vol. II (towards end of volume).
45. Cf. Article III of the Treaty (concluded 20th February, 1887) between Italy and Germany.
46. F. Crispi, *Politica estera*, pp. 359 et seq.
47. Cf. a letter by Barrère to Visconti-Venosta, 14th December, 1900; and Visconti-Venosta's reply, 16th December, 1900. G. Caprin, *I trattati segreti della Triplice Alleanza*, pp. 125 et seq.
48. For a brief analysis of this aspect of the situation, see L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 129. A good résumé is also in G. McLellan, *Modern Italy*, p. 183.
49. L. Villari, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
50. Cf. L. Lodi, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-50 and 152-53.
51. On the Libyan campaign and its results, see F. de Chaurand, *Come l'esercito italiano entrò in guerra*. Parte seconda—Chapters XIII and XIV. For its disorganization of military supplies, etc., L. Segato, *L'Italia nella guerra mondiale*, vol. I, pp. 6 et seq. For a general account of the historical development of the army, see the chapter "Esercito italiano," by F. Bava-Beccaris in the work *Cinquant'anni di storia italiana*, vol. I, p. 83.

52. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 149-50. On the lack of diplomatic preparation, cf. R. de Cesare, *Mezzo secolo di storia italiana*, p. 139.
53. The different aspects of European hostility are analysed in S. Cilibrizzi, vol. iv, pp. 177 et seq.
54. G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, vol. ii, p. 372. Cf. also B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, p. 262.
55. Cf. B. Croce, op. cit., p. 262.
56. R. de Cesare, *Mezzo secolo di storia italiana* (sommario) (1913, 3rd edition), pp. 142-43.
57. Cf. A. Salandra, *La neutralità italiana* (edition 1928), p. 215: "The acquisition by force of arms of a vast territory on the shores of the Mediterranean is, for the new Italy, a fact far more important and decisive than any colonial enterprise. It is a *national enterprise* and as such it is felt and willed by the country . . ." etc. The passage quoted was written in 1912. Recalling it after the war, Salandra diminished some of its emphasis, but confirmed the substance.
58. For some of the feeling of the time, see G. D'Annunzio, *Canzoni della gesta d'oltremare*, p. 3; also the poems of Ada Negri, *Esilio*, and a speech by G. Pascoli, "La Grande Proletaria si è mossa." Cf. also a significant speech delivered in Florence, 28th December, 1911, by F. Martini, in commemoration of the Tuscan officers fallen in Libya. "Italy is awake. The blood of our soldiers and sailors which bathes the sands of Homs, of Sidi Messeri and of Ain Zara has renewed and refashioned us. . . . Of what value are Gebel, Fazzan, Cyrenaica? This I cannot gauge. They have at least brought about a revival which is above price, a union of the whole nation unexampled by Italian history. Never . . . was Italy thus united in faith and will." (Quoted from B. Croce, op. cit., p. 324.)
59. For some of the views of the supporters of the war, see S. Barzilai, *Vita parlamentare*, part iii, pp. 469-93. (Especially the articles "Per l'Italia che va a Tripoli.") And Ivanoe Bonomi, *Dieci anni di politica italiana*, pp. 57 et seq. A. Labriola had formulated his point of view as early as 1902. Cf. his *Scritti vari*. The Nationalist point of view is expressed by E. Corradini in *Discorsi politici* and *L'ora di Tripoli*.
60. Cf. a speech by Labriola to the Camera. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 13 febbraio, 1914, pp. 1177 et seq.) "The Libyan enterprise is a national enterprise, not a colonial enterprise. I believe that those who are trying to make people swallow it as an economic enterprise, destined to absorb our surplus population are . . . on the wrong road . . ." etc.
61. B. Croce, op. cit., pp. 260-61. Cf. also speech by F. Arcà, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 26 febbraio, 1914, pp. 1750 et seq.
62. For F. Turati's criticism, see *Le vie maestre del socialismo*, pp. 173 et seq. For other criticism, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati, Tornata del 12 febbraio, 1914, pp. 1109 et seq. Other

- (more general) aspects of Socialist criticism are quoted in S. Sighele, *Ultime pagine nazionaliste*, p. 197.
63. For the result of the enquiry, see *Atti parlamentari*. Legislatura XXIII, Sessione 1909-13. *Atti stampati*. Documento LVII. *Relazione della commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sulla spesa di costruzione del Palazzo di Giustizia*, vols. 1 and II. The matter was very much debated both in the Camera and the Senate. Vide especially the *Atti parlamentari* of June 1913.
 64. Cf. the report on the Bill by Bertolini, in *Atti parlamentari*. Camera dei Deputati. Legislatura XXIII, Sessione 1909-13. *Atti stampati*, vol. XIX, no. 907—A.
 65. Cf. B. Croce, op. cit., p. 257.
 66. Cf. especially a speech by G. Mosca, a distinguished political theorist and deputy, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 7 maggio, 1912, pp. 19118 et seq.
 67. Cf. R. de Cesare, *Mezzosecolo di storia italiana*, 1913, pp. 136-38.
 68. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 155.
 69. Cf. L. Villari, *Italy*, pp. 131-32. The text of the pact is given in M. Rosi, *L'Italia odierna*, vol. II, part III, p. 2150.
 70. See the account of the interview published in *Giornale D'Italia*, 8th November, 1913. Cf. also L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 163-64.
 71. S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 292. A good detailed account of the electoral corruption (with examples cited from the different constituencies) is in J. Alazard, *L'Italie et le conflit européen*, pp. 16-22. Cf. also A. Fradeletto, *La fine d'un parlamento e la dittatura di un Ministro*; and G. Salvemini, *Il ministro della mala vita*.
 72. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 5 dicembre, 1913, pp. 154 et seq.
 73. O. Raimondi, "Discorsi" in *L'Eloquenza*, 15th February, 1914, p. 583. A large section of the speech is printed in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. IV, pp. 299-300.
 74. L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 164 et seq.
 75. Cf. J. Alazard, *L'Italie et le conflit européen*, pp. 29-30, has an excellent analysis of this aspect of Giolitti's system. Cf. also his quotations from contemporary newspapers, *La Tribuna*, 12th March, 1914; *Corriere della Sera*, 9th March, 1914.
 76. On the renewal of the Triple Alliance, see A. Singer, *Histoire de la Triple Alliance*, p. 297.
 77. A. F. Pribram, *Les traités politiques secrets de l'Autriche-Hongrie*, 1879-1914, Tome I, *Le secret de la Triple Alliance* (Paris, 1923), pp. 378 et seq.
 78. Cf. J. Alazard, *L'Italie et le conflit européen* (1914-16), p. 2: "L'incident du *Manouba* et du *Carthage* avait facilité le renouvellement anticipé de la Triplice: en quelques jours, les efforts heureux de plus de dix ans s'étaient évanouis et l'amitié franco-italienne avait perdu la solidité que lui avait donnée la diplomatie de Monsieur Barrère. . . ."

CHAPTER IX

1. On the solution of the crisis, see a speech by A. Labriola, *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 3 aprile, 1914, p. 2194.
2. For Salandra's views on the function of a Liberal Party, see his book, *La politica nazionale e il partito liberale* (Milan, 1912), especially pp. 20-2.
3. A. Salandra, *La neutralità italiana*, pp. 256 and 340. Cf. also L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 133. (Salandra's book is one of the most reliable and fundamental sources for the period. It contains many official reports and papers.)
4. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 2 aprile, 1914, pp. 2144 et seq.
5. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 3 aprile, 1914, pp. 2210 et seq.
6. Cf. Giolitti's admission of Salandra's skill in handling the matter. *Memorie della mia vita*, Milano, 1922, vol. ii, p. 511.
7. Cf. Salandra's statement in his programme of government. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 2 aprile, 1914.)
8. There is an interesting account of these disorders in G. Frignani, *Appunti per la cronache del fascismo romagnolo* (Bologna, 1933), pp. 13 et seq. Cf. also B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, p. 268; also S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iv, pp. 334-35. A good contemporary account of events in Emilia and the Romagna is in A. Raghianti, *Gli uomini rossi all'arrembaggio dello stato* (Bologna, 1914). Cf. also Salandra, op. cit., pp. 206-9.
9. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 171.
10. Cf. L. Villari, *Italy* (Modern World Series), p. 134.
11. This point is very vividly brought out by Salandra, op. cit., pp. 207-12.
12. Cf. the views expressed by some of the Socialists in their speeches to Parliament. (*Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 10 giugno, 1914, pp. 3941 et seq.)
13. The phenomenon of the "Red Week" is particularly interesting if considered, e.g., in relation to such theories as those of Ortega y Gasset, *Revolt of the Masses*.
14. For the background of the decree, see B. di Bülow, *Memorie* (Milano), 1931, vol. iii, p. 225. On Austrian hostility to the Italians in Trieste, cf. A. Salandra, *La neutralità italiana*, p. 31.
15. Cf. S. Barzilai, *Dalla triplice alleanza al conflitto europeo* (Roma, 1914), p. 51.
16. Cf. A. Salandra, op. cit., pp. 26-7. Details of the Abbazia discussions are in A. F. Pribram, *Les traités politiques secrets de l'Autriche-Hongrie, 1879-1914*, tome i. *Le secret de la Triple Alliance* (Paris, 1923), pp. 404 et seq.

17. A. Salandra, op. cit., pp. 32-7. For the general attitude of the Camera regarding giving satisfaction to Austria, see *Atti parlamentari. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 27 maggio, 1914*, p. 3327.
18. Cf. G. McClellan, *Modern Italy* (Princeton, U.S.A.), p. 190.
19. Cf. L. Villari, *Italy* (Modern World Series), p. 135.
20. Cf. Salandra, *La neutralità italiana*, p. 100.
21. Cf. Berchtold's view, quoted in Bernadotte Schmitt, *Comment vint la guerre* (Paris, 1932), vol. ii, p. 362.
22. Cf. quoted from Salandra, op. cit., p. 160. Salandra adds that the Italian Ambassador in Paris received visits from Bourgeois, Briand, Barthou, Deschanel.
23. Cf. an interesting comment on the Triple Alliance made by Treitschke in 1883. "The Italians, in their inmost hearts, would undoubtedly have preferred an alliance with the sister Latin nation than an alliance with their age-long enemies the Germans, from their schooldays they have been taught that the Brenner and the Carso are the natural frontiers of their country, and the cry for: Trent and Trieste! is the expression of a widespread national aspiration." (Quoted from Croce, op. cit., p. 304. Footnote to Count di Robilant's policy.)
24. On the various divisions of public opinion, see L. Villari, op. cit., pp. 136-38; B. Croce, *A History of Italy*, pp. 277-87; Salandra, *La neutralità italiana*, pp. 218 et seq.
25. Cf. Salandra, op. cit., p. 228.
26. Cf. Salandra, op. cit., p. 230.
27. For an excellent résumé of Italy's unpreparedness—both material and spiritual—see the Memorandum presented by Salandra to the King (30th September, 1914). Published in *La neutralità italiana*, p. 332. Other aspects are described in Giovanni Giuriati, *La Vigilia*.
28. Much has been written on the neglected state of the army at this time, and several attempts have been made to analyse its historical development. Cf. Salandra, op. cit., pp. 247 et seq. A more detailed account supported by interesting statistics is that of F. Bara-Beccaris, "Esercito italiano" in *Cinquant'anni di storia italiana*, vol. i, p. 83. (Publication issued by the Accademia dei Lincei.)
Other important works are L. Cadorna, *La guerra alla fronte italiana fino all'arresto sulla linea della Piave* (Milan, 1921); F. de Chaurand, *Come l'esercito italiano entrò in guerra*. Impressions of the army before the war are given by E. de Bono, *Nell'esercito nostro prima della guerra*, and E. de Rossi, *La vita di un ufficiale italiano fino alla guerra* (second edition).
29. Very important details of the lack of supplies at this time and the defects in organization are given in A. Salandra, op. cit., pp. 260 et seq.; also p. 269.
30. Cf. the Memorandum presented by Salandra to the King, 30th September, 1914. Published in *La neutralità italiana*, pp. 332-35. As regards the lack of clothing for the soldiers, a few figures are enough

to demonstrate the appalling neglect shown by the Ministry of War. Of 96 infantry regiments, only 56 possessed woollen mantles; and of 12 regiments of bersaglieri, only 8 had them (Salandra, op. cit., p. 291). An even more striking picture of the facts is in L. Cadorna, *La guerra alla fronte italiana* (Milan, 1923), vol. i, p. 13. Only the following arms were at the disposition of the army: 750,000 rifles of an 1891 model and 1,200,000 rifles of the old Wetterley model; 150 machine-gun sections; 64 campaign pieces of artillery for each army corps, where the French corps had 120 and the Germans 144. Cf. also the official publication, *L'esercito italiano nella grande guerra* (1915-18), vol. i, *Le forze belligeranti*.

31. This point is very well brought out in F. de Chaurand, *Come l'esercito italiano entrò in guerra* (Milano, 1929), p. 149. "The army could not but suffer from some psychological weakness . . . because of the frequent use which had been made of it to maintain order. As a result the army finished by considering itself an instrument of internal repression . . . an instrument of domination for the bourgeoisie, and of foreign adventures for the capitalists." On the spread of pacificism, see op. cit., pp. 142 et seq.
32. There is a remarkable chapter on the lack of "spiritual preparation" (together with an analysis of its different aspects and causes) in Salandra's book, op. cit., pp. 193-242.
33. A brief sketch of these crises is given in S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., pp. 534-35.
34. Cf. Salandra's view, *La neutralità italiana*, p. 281. The preceding pages (from p. 268) should be read for an understanding of the confusion in the Ministry of War. For the dissension between the Ministry and the General Staff, cf. p. 266.
35. Cf. Salandra, op. cit., p. 346; or S. Cilibrizzi, op. cit., vol. iv, p. 526.
36. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 173.
37. For Salandra's review of Sonnino, see op. cit., pp. 356 et seq. (especially p. 360).
38. The speech is published in A. Salandra, *I discorsi della guerra* (Milano, 1922), pp. 9 et seq.
39. Cf. *Atti parlamentari*. Discussioni alla Camera dei Deputati. Tornata del 5 dicembre, 1914, p. 5650.
40. For details of the Italian negotiations with Austria, see A. Salandra, *L'intervento*, pp. 77-143. A useful but not quite unbiased résumé is in G. McClellan, *Modern Italy*, pp. 190 et seq.
41. Cf. Salandra, op. cit., pp. 155 et seq. Cf. also the *Memoirs of Sir Rennell Rodd*, British Ambassador in Rome.
42. Salandra, op. cit., p. 164.
43. For an analysis of neutralist opinion and its strength among the deputies of the Camera, see A. Salandra, *L'intervento*, pp. 233 et seq.
44. Cf. A. Salandra, op. cit., pp. 262-63: "Le espressioni brevi e sintetiche non rappresentano esattamente la realtà complessa . . . tuttavia si potrebbe dire con sufficiente approssimazione che, mentre

i neutralisti tenevano il campo a Montecitorio, gl'intervenisti occupavano le piazze."

45. Cf. also L. Lodi, op. cit., pp. 177-78, for a description of the popular reception which awaited d'Annunzio on his arrival from France. Salandra (op. cit., pp. 237-38) describes how he sent Professor Cozzani on a special mission to Paris to ask the poet to submit the manuscript of his address to the Cabinet. No more significant tribute could be paid to d'Annunzio's oratory or the influence he exerted in the country. (See p. 240 for a facsimile of d'Annunzio's letter to Salandra regarding the commemoration. The lyrical poem *Sagra* was recited in honour of the occasion.)
46. Cf. on this point Salandra's description of the effect of d'Annunzio's writings, op. cit., pp. 219-20. There is an interesting extract from one of his articles in the *Petite Gironde* of Bordeaux: "L'ora di fare e di patire è venuta per l'Italia. . . . Quest'ora magnifica e terribile coincide con l'ora più solenne di tutto il nostro destino nazionale. Il popolo italiano è in piedi e pare ascolti e comprenda alfine il ritmo delle sue fonti nascoste. . . ."
47. Cf. G. D'Annunzio, *Per la più grande Italia, orazioni e messaggi* (Milan, 1918). For speeches made by other celebrities regarding the war, see P. Gammelli and G. Fabbri, *L'arma della parola nella guerra d'Italia* (Teranno, 1918), vol. i. A remarkable analysis of people's ideas and feelings is contained in V. E. Orlando's speeches, which should be read for their literary worth alone. An English and a French translation have been published, but neither does justice to the original (V. E. Orlando, *Discorsi per la guerra*). Cf. also his *Discorsi politici*. A particularly interesting speech on Italy's feeling of obligation to Trieste and Trent is that of 21st November, 1915, delivered at Palermo.
48. For the strength and sincerity of popular sentiment regarding the cause of the Entente, cf. the testimony of a Frenchman resident in Italy—testimony offered at a time when efforts were being made to depreciate the causes of Italy's entry into the war. "Quiconque a vécu en Italie durant les mois pénibles de la neutralité italienne, sait parfaitement que ce ne sont pas de vains marchandages qui ont poussé le peuple italien à entrer en guerre. On sache bien . . . que c'est la 'piazza' qui a imposé la guerre . . . [et] 'la piazza' n'avait pas fait de calculs. Elle était allée d'instinct vers ceux dont l'indépendance était gravement menacé; les malheurs de la Belgique et de la France envahies avaient profondément secoué les cœurs italiens. Il ne faut pas oublier cet enthousiasme avec le quel l'Italie s'est unie à l'Entente." (J. Alazard, *Communisme et Fascio en Italie*, Paris, 1922.)
49. The report of Giolitti's conversation with Carcano, given in Salandra, op. cit., pp. 250-51. Cf. also p. 249, résumé of Giolitti's letter to the deputy Giovannelli. Giolitti admits his forebodings regarding intervention in his memoirs, but gives them a more moderate expression.

50. A brief allusion to these events is in L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 178. Full details in Salandra, op. cit., pp. 260 et seq. Cf. also the contemporary account (given in the *Tribuna*) of Giolitti's influence: "Fra le attestazioni di fiducia . . . che in questi giorni giungono numerose all'on. Giolitti sono significative quelle di oltre 300 deputati e di oltre 100 Senatori che, con telegrammi, con lettere e con la loro visita personale, sono pervenute all'emènente uomo."
51. Cf. the facsimile of the Cabinet's resolution (written out by Sonnino) in A. Salandra, op. cit., p. 272. For details of the Cabinet's attitude, op. cit., pp. 269-72.
52. Interesting details are in Salandra, op. cit., pp. 283 et seq. Not without reason the nationalist newspaper, *L'Idea nazionale*, wrote "Il Re ha salvato l'Italia." Cf. also J. B. McClellan, *Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1933), p. 197.
53. Cf. Villari's comment on the situation—*Italy*, by L. Villari (Modern World Series, Ernest Benn, London, 1929): "The return of Salandra, in spite of the evident hostility of the parliamentary majority, was an unmistakable sign of the breakdown of the parliamentary system. The Cabinet undoubtedly had the country behind it, and the King acted wisely and patriotically in rejecting its resignation. . . . But the Government's position was undermined, and throughout the war each successive Cabinet was in the awkward position of having no majority of its own to count on. . . . The consequences of this state of things . . . accentuated that divorce between Parliament and the nation which had been developing ever since the end of the Risorgimento epoch."
54. Numerous works have been written on the details of the Italian campaigns. There is a useful book in English by L. Villari, *The War on the Italian Front* (London, 1932). In Italian (besides the works already cited), see Pompilio Schiarini, *L'Armata del Trentino* (1915-1919). Also G. Volpè, *Ottobre 1917—dal'Isonzo al Piave*. With it should be compared L. Cadorna, *Altro pagine sulla grande guerra*. Two general books are L. Segato, *L'Italia nella guerra mondiale*, and F. Quintavalle, *Cronistoria della guerra* (1921). A useful symposium is *La nostra guerra* (contains chapters by G. del Vecchio, G. Arias, etc.).
55. Cf. Lodi's criticism of Salandra, *ibid.*, pp. 180 et seq.
56. For an account of the Salandra-Sonnino Government, see a very well-informed book by J. Alazard, *L'Italie et le conflit européen* (1914-16), chap. ix.
57. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 183.
58. On the personality of Orlando, see especially the essay by Vincenzo Carboni, *Studio su l'Eloquenza di V. E. Orlando* (printed as appendix to Orlando's book, *F. Crispi*). Cf. also the excellent analysis by O. Malagodi in his preface to Orlando's *Discorsi politici*, especially pp. vi-ix. (For his ministry, see Hauteceur, *Le ministère de M. Orlando*.)

1. The slogan was that of the Socialist deputy, Treves. It should be remembered also that the efforts of the Pope to bring about peace contributed to the success of pacifist propaganda. Cf. his manifesto of August 1917 appealing for the cessation of "Useless Slaughter."
2. For details, see L. Villari, *The War on the Italian Front* (1932), pp. 247-80.
3. For Italy's claims in the Tyrol, see Cesare Battisti, *Il Trentino* (well illustrated with maps). A more detailed work (also very well illustrated) is that by Attilio Brunialti, *Trento e Trieste dal Brennero alle Rive dell'Adriatico*. (Written in 1916, and therefore free from any recriminations over the peace. Contains also an account of the Italian claims to Dalmatia.) The standard work on Italy's claims (with good documentation) is Attilio Tamaro, *La Vénétie Julienne et la Dalmatie, histoire de la nation italienne sur ses frontières orientales*, 3 vols. (1918).

Several monumental works have recently appeared on the same theme, but they are liable to be partisan in tone. A useful up-to-date statement of Italy's standpoint is the series of articles in *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, by Mario Toscano. (Cf. for instance vol. iv, nos. 3-4, July-December 1937.)

2. The main documents concerning the Fiume question are in vol. v, Appendix III, of the *History of the Peace Conference*. For the text of the Treaty of London, see *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1919, vol. cxii, pp. 973 et seq.
3. Italian arguments regarding possession of Dalmatia are well stated by Giotto Dainelli, *La Dalmazia cenni geografici e statistici*.
4. See Don Sturzo, *Italy and Fascismo*, p. 43.
5. Cf. Ledi's account, op. cit., pp. 207-8. For some very useful side-lights on the inner story of the negotiations in Paris, see two books recently published by Italians present at the Conference: Aldrovandi Marescotti, *Guerra diplomatica, Ricordi*, 1914-1919, and S. Crespi, *Alla difesa d'Italia in guerra e a Versailles*.
6. Cf. especially the analysis by J. Alazard in his interesting study of post-war Italy (*Communisme et Fascio en Italie*, Paris, 1922, pp. 17 et seq.): "L'Italie ne comprenait pas pourquoi les Alliés traitaient avec tant de bienveillance des peuples qui, hier encore, étaient ses ennemis, et pourquoi, dans une controverse aussi grave, les Croates rencontraient autant de sympathies que les Italiens. . . ." And again (p. 18) ". . . l'Italie comptait sur l'amitié et l'appui des nations auxquelles elle s'était jointe; elle avait l'impression que cette amitié et cet appui lui faisaient défaut."

Cf. also Don Sturzo, op. cit., p. 44: "The general impression was that the Entente did not realize the strength of Italy, her rights and claims; people spoke and wrote of the 'vittoria mutilata' . . . the idea that the war could be said to have been lost so far as national ends were concerned, spread among the masses. . . ." Much the same point is made in L. Villari, *Italy*, p. 312: ". . . What did

Italy find . . . at the Peace Conference? . . . Her Allies grudged her a very considerable part of the . . . ex-Austrian territories claimed by her, now advancing ethnographic reasons, now the necessity that Adriatic ports be given to other States for whom they would be useful" . . . etc.

67. *Corriere della Sera*, 10th June, 1919. (I am indebted to M. Alazard for this reference.)
68. Cf. L. Lodi, op. cit., p. 233.

EPILOGUE

Innumerable works have of course been written on the origins of Fascism and the period of politics following the war. A particularly good book by a foreigner is H. W. Schneider's *Making the Fascist State*; and the *Italy of Mussolini* by H. Finner should be read, and (in German) Beckerath's *Italien unter dem Faschismus*. Italian works are nearly all strongly partisan, and must be balanced by continual reference to the facts and arguments put forward by the other side (Fascist or anti-Fascist as the case may be). A distinguished, thoughtful book is *Italy and Fascismo* by Don Sturzo (anti-Fascist). A very stimulating and suggestive work by an unorthodox Fascist (written in 1924) is *Fascism* by G. Prezolini. The best official histories are as follows: R. Farinacci, *Storia della rivoluzione fascista*; Chiurco, *Storia della rivoluzione fascista*. G. Volpè (always a distinguished writer), *Guerra, dopoguerra, fascismo* and *Historia del movimento fascista*. From a general theoretical point of view there is *Che cosa è il fascismo* by the philosopher, G. Gentile.

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